

LABOR AGE

THE VOICE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR

COAL WAR IN KENTUCKY

TESS HUFF OF HARLAN

Communists and the Unions

A. J. MUSTE

Mansfield--Brooklyn Edison --Allentown

"America's Way Out"--*Reviewed*

By J. C. KENNEDY

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LABOR AGE

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IN THIS ISSUE

DEPRESSION grows, causing Capitalism's High Priests to admit that it is on trial. In the United States, radical action on the part of the workers has not kept pace with the unemployment and wage-cutting to which they have been subjected. The Communist Party, which by all the laws of economics and psychology, should count to gain at such an hour, is weaker than it was three or four years ago. It is imperative that the tendencies which cause this state of affairs should be explained, in order that something worth-while may be achieved for the workers. The fatal weakness of the Communists—in the sectarian policies which they adopted three years ago—are analyzed by A. J. Muste out of some of the material used in his debate with William Z. Foster. The admissions of the Communist organs themselves spell nothing less than collapse in the program of building up sectarian unions. They have lost influence in quarters where they once were powerful. The deadly effects of isolation illustrate the need for industrial activity such as the C. P. L. A. has begun.

HARLAN, KY., has been in the newspapers by reason of the bloody war being waged there between starving miners and company gunmen. There is a sample there of what American workers will do when their backs are against the wall. There is a prophecy there of what the Winter of 1931 may see in numerous centers. Tess Huff can tell us of Harlan, its corrupt, company-controlled courts and its fighting miners better than any one. He lives in the center of the region, the son of an attorney, deeply in sympathy with the oppressed coal-diggers. His dramatic account of what has happened and what will probably happen further in the coal regions of the "Dark and Bloody Ground" links up with the struggle of the miners in the sister state of West Virginia.

THEN there is Mansfield with its steel strike and Brooklyn with its organization campaign among the employees of the powerful Edison Company. Our representative in the former place gives a rapid fire picture of what happened there. We are pleased that the C. P. L. A., as in West Virginia, was on the job and that its representative, a steel worker, was able to be of such cooperative aid to the strikers. It is a good example of the promise there is in having agitators out in American industry, the importance of which we have been stressing. S. W. Levich, one of those laid-off by the Brooklyn Edison and now Secretary of the Organization Committee of Brooklyn Edison employees, is well qualified from his own personal experiences to recount the reasons for that campaign.

ALLENTOWN also has a strike of silk workers—a walk-out unexpected and regarded as something of a miracle. We learn of it from one who is in it. A critical examination of the conduct of the battle will be made in our next issue, but it is significant that a mass walk-out took place in this hitherto overwhelming non-union community.

IN all of these workers' revolts the C. P. L. A. is "at it" with the full vigor of its resources. Beyond that, there is the glorious effort in West Virginia, in which we have had full share. Wage-cutting caused a protest in Wall Street, which sent the message that J. P. Morgan and Co. had been harrassed on the issue. In "The Fight Grows Hotter" a brief glimpse is afforded of C. P. L. A. activities.

AS he moves Westward, Israel Mufson notes the depression which has hit the Southwest. Roving workers, seeking escape, dot the land. While the conditions among the American peasantry in that section appall and astound.

JC. KENNEDY has not only had the intellectual training with which to analyze Norman Thomas's exposition of his Socialism. He has also been practically at work in the field of Socialist and labor activity. In turn he has been Socialist member of the Chicago City Council, Secretary of the Washington Farmer Labor Party, head of the Seattle Labor College and instructor of economics at Brookwood. His "Whither Socialism?" is more than a book review. *It is a criticism* of the present Socialist Party.

MATTHEW WOLL, has evolved into the statesman of the American Federation of Labor. His utterances and initiative far outshadow those of President William Green. Against prohibition and for high tariffs he is vociferously vocal. That these expressions of his did not sit well with the members of his own union may be something of a surprise. We print the open letter to Matthew Woll at the request of the Unemployed Chapel of Local 1 of the International Photo-Engravers' Union, which now numbers 532 members of the New York local.

JERGER'S cartoon is, as usual, effective in its sarcasm and challenging intent. Frank Palmer's "Flashes" and other features appear in their customary order.

· L A B O R · A G E ·

June, 1931

EDITORIALS

LEGISLATURES adjourn without action for unemployment relief. Extra session of Congress is spurned by the Engineer. Cities complain that their debt limits are taxed to the utmost, and that they are unable to help the unemployed. Charity organizations admit inability to cope with the winter of 1931.

The Darkening Winter of 1931

Spontaneous strikes pull out thousands of workers in Allentown, Western Pennsylvania, Mansfield, and other centers. Small one and two day walk-outs increase in number. There is shooting in Kentucky, and the militia is brought in to give bullets instead of bread to the starving miners. Fifteen hundred West Virginia coal-diggers besiege the State Capitol with a cry for food. The Governor gives them \$10 and wishes them well. Red Cross continues to talk blandly about its "limitations."

Unemployment is on the up-grade rather than on the decline. Public utilities, with exclusive monopoly rights, are enjoying bonanza years. Their profits soar in the midst of want. They show their "civic appreciation" by cutting their own working forces, to make the depression worse. Electric light companies, telephone corporations, traction and railroad systems are at one in throwing men on the breadlines everywhere. President James Farrell, in a moment of expansion, weeps over the miners of Kentucky and West Virginia in his address to the Steel Institute, and decries wage cuts. But wage cuts go on, just the same.

So we stand, with these things occurring, looking forward to the coming winter. There will probably be an "early session" of Congress—in October or November—to save the Hooverian face. Were that Congress inclined to do so, it will be almost too late to do anything real toward unemployment relief. The legislatures will largely be resting on their laurels for two years. The army of the unemployed will be at the mercy of suicide and starvation—or revolt.

Progressive labor forces have a tremendous job ahead in forcing action on the unemployment evil. Experience in the Brooklyn Edison situation indicates that this can best be done by linking unemployment agitation up with a specific large corporation in a specific lay-off and joining up this agitation with an organizing campaign. The Brooklyn Edison case is now in the newspapers. It is being discussed. Attacks from many quarters are being made upon the company. Such attacks will spread to other corporations, pursuing like policies. Hand in hand, organization of men remaining at work will go on.

More of such activity must be carried out. Though the resources of Progressive Laborites are not great, growing

possibilities lie before them. They can meet the worker on the basis of his present problem. They can, more effectively than any other group, spread the attack upon the anti-worker program of the big corporations. Unemployment relief will only be secured when the message is brought to the factory gates and office doors. There is where the more advanced program for labor emancipation can be forged out, too, step by step. The prospect ahead for the Winter of 1931 calls for renewed agitation in the mills and factories.

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CHIEF Pooh-Bahs of the Profit System, in goodly numbers, gathered in two conventions in late April and early May to view the state of the world.

At Atlantic City the National Chamber of Commerce had its discussions and deliberations. At Washington the International Chamber of Commerce met, close on the heels of the other gathering.

Here were the Master Minds directing Things as They Are. What words of wisdom would they utter, with promise of some Divine plan to ease us all out of the present misery? President Daniel Willard, of the B. & O. Railroad, had called upon these Master Minds to answer the "Challenge to Capitalism." The hoary old *Review of Reviews* had thought well enough of this utterance to reprint it as a leading contribution. Conservative newspapers had shaken their heads in their editorial columns, agreeing that Capitalism was being submitted to an acid test. Dr. Ernst Wagemann, Director of the Berlin Office of Statistics, declared this the greatest upheaval in 100 years. President Rome Stephenson, of the American Bankers Association, acknowledged it "the masterpiece in depressions."

When all the orating and debating and gyrating was over with, the Masters of the Profit-Seeking World had said absolutely nothing. Their public resolutions were about as clear as an Arctic night. The International Chamber resolved, in brief, as follows:

Tariffs are pretty bad, BUT all the conditions surrounding each nation must be considered in connection with them.

War debts and reparations might be changed, BUT only if "warranted by changing economic conditions."

National budgets should be balanced, BUT without any increase of taxation.

Armaments should be reduced, BUT to the lowest limit "possible."

Russia was dodged, at least openly, and the depression was officially ignored, when all is summed up.

The Delphic oracle has found a rival. These mighty geniuses of finance and barter and trade were publicly as blank as the gaze of an Arrow collar model.

What happened in secret conclaves is quite another story. We know well that Russia was discussed and the depression was not ignored in those hidden gatherings. Remembering how deeply the post-war conferences of international politicians were soaked in oil imperialism, while pretending something quite different, we can visualize what went on behind the curtains in Washington. The workers of the world are to pay for the depression. That was the cheery thought running through the minds of the Masters. American laboring people were particularly set upon as enjoying too high wage scales. The onslaught, already begun, is to go merrily on.

And yet—did not a shadow of the slow-turning historical wheel fall aslant their plottings? After all, this class are the successors of that weazen, cowardly crew upon whom the Robber Barons pounced with great abandon some centuries back. A little further turn of the wheel, and the workers may be at their throats, as has been the case in Russia. Perhaps some such unquiet thought added to their paralysis, and magnified their stutterings.



AMERICAN Federation of Labor officialdom celebrates the depression by \$5 to \$7 a plate dinners. Gala events of that kind are becoming the rage in official labor circles.

Non-Partisanship and Non-Militancy

last year John Manning, head of the Union Label Department which nobody heeds, was sent off to Merrie England at such a fete. This year Joseph Ryan, president of the New York central body, goes abroad to advise the British brothers how to get "high wages" and starve.

Ryan gets a high-falutin' dinner also. And at the festive board one would have thought that they were sitting at a Tammany whoopee party for "Jimmy" Walker. Tammany was everywhere at the feast, and President John Sullivan of the New York Federation of Labor, decried any one who dared touch the Tiger's sacred hide. He almost wept tears over District Attorney Crain.

Well may John so speak. He enjoys a good second-class job on the State payroll, by virtue of the Tiger. Call the roll of officials of most State Federations of Labor and of other A. F. of L. officials and you will begin to observe the effects of "non-partisanship." The president of the West Virginia Federation of Labor is a sort of second-class Republican politician, who ran for office on the same ticket with the most vicious injunction judge in the State. The president of the New Jersey Federation is a Democratic State Senator, and Theodore Brandle's roughnecks have bodily thrown Socialists out of conventions of that body for the greater glory of Boss Hague. John L. Lewis, who could not defy the Mitchell Palmer injunction, has aspired to be Republican Secretary of Labor, and has supported Coolidge and Hoover in that hope. The secretary of the California Federation of Labor, Paul Scharrenberg, campaigned in behalf of ex-Governor Young, who so brutally kept Tom Mooney in jail. And the limit of the non-partisan policy was reached in the open championship by Frank Feenev, president of the Elevator Constructors, and other "labor skates" of Joseph Grundy, bitterest enemy of the workers that America has ever known.

"Reward Your Friends and Punish Your Enemies,"

simmers down to that ancient motto of the cheap politician: "Reward Those Who Give You Jobs."

The sleeping sickness of "non-partisanship" seeps down to the smallest officials of the smallest central bodies, as a rule. In a medium-sized town of Eastern Pennsylvania, the secretary of the central body is a Republican ward-worker, who counts strongly on the few dollars per day that he gets from election day activity. Before each election, he begs enough money from local office-seekers to "throw a feed" for the delegates to the central body. That is the extent of the body's "non-partisan" action.

Need we wonder that militancy has died in the A. F. of L. officialdom?



MISS MARY BARKER, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has a significant signed editorial in the current issue of the official organ of that union. She insists that for an

A Racket vs. a Movement

organization such as a trade union, its "program, the reason for the group existence, is of greater importance than is the size of its membership." "A growing membership," she goes on to say, "is all to the good provided it represents the program at work and not in abeyance."

Miss Barker's words carry weight. She took office as President of the American Federation of Teachers when its membership and activities were at a low ebb. The organization has grown in membership, activity and morale since she became its head, and in no small measure due to her leadership. She is an important figure in the Southern labor movement and in the field of workers' education, being among other things chairman of the Executive Committee of the Southern Summer School for Women Workers in Industry.

Her editorial points to the fundamental distinction between the reactionaries in the labor movement, on the one hand, and the progressives and radicals in the movement, on the other. To the former a trade union is fundamentally and exclusively (for all practical purposes) a business organization to get certain immediate gains, wages, hours and conditions of work, for a certain number of people employed in a particular craft or trade. Now, there is certainly nothing wrong about people seeking these ends; but an organization having no other program is bound to become narrow and selfish, not very deeply interested even in other workers in closely related crafts. Witness the spectacle of hundreds of building trade workers working on the same building engaged in bitter controversies with each other.

Furthermore, there is serious danger that an organization thus narrow and selfish, and naturally in the course of time acquiring leaders who also tend to be narrow and selfish, will degenerate into a racket. Not only is it likely to lose interest in helping others, it becomes a machine for preying on others in a vicious, anti-social manner. That is precisely what has happened in a considerable number of instances in the American labor movement.

When we say that, we are not blind to the fact that there are unions in which there is no racketeering, that in these days the cry of racketeering against the unions is usually raised by those who want to turn away attention from racketeering on a large scale in business and politics, and that the capitalist economic system under which we live is itself essentially a racket. For men and women in the labor movement it is nevertheless important to recognize the real

source of such racketeering as it has developed in the movement. Pure and simple trade unionism without "a significant social program" is in the very nature of the case bound eventually to degenerate into racketeering.

The only thing that can save the labor movement from such a fate is that it should be a movement—a movement as Miss Barker suggests—with a significant social program. For the workers in modern industrial society the only significant social program is one which aims at the fundamental reconstruction of society, at an economic and social order under the control of the workers, and from which every vestige of economic injustice and exploitation has been removed. If the labor movement remains "a movement," it will have no difficulty keeping itself clear of racketeering.

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THE Conference for Progressive Labor Action has always asserted that the talk about the private insurance companies providing workers with unemployment insurance

The Cat Is Out Of The Bag

was not genuine but simply an attempt to delay, and if possible to prevent altogether, the issue of adequate compulsory unemployment insurance plans in national and state legislatures. Our contention is now borne out by a very important utterance from no less an authority than Henry Moir, President of the United Life Insurance Company, who declared at a recent meeting of the Actuarial Society of America, that it was doubtful whether any of the large insurance companies "would ever issue unemployment insurance policies."

The chief reasons he assigns are two. In the first place he points out: "Any corporation starting this business (of furnishing unemployment insurance) would have to carry the obligation separately and quite distinct from the life insurance funds, which have no responsibility for the unemployment claims. Such a stipulation is necessary and in accord with the fundamental provisions of our life insurance laws; yet it would remove one great reason for the work being handled by a large life company—namely magnitude."

In the second place, he points out that if an unemployment insurance scheme is to work, funds would have to accumulate while business is active and conditions sound. Under those conditions, however, it would be hard to earn high interest rates on money. This would be a serious obstacle to accumulating large revenues. The money would have to be paid out "when times of depression come and people are out of work, with money scarce." At such times, however, the value of the securities held by the company would be low and it would be difficult to realize cash on them.

It would be hard to find any clearer refutation of the case for turning over the writing of unemployment insurance to the private companies. There remains, as we have all along contended, no practical alternative to the provision of adequate compulsory unemployment compensation through legislative action.

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DR. HOOVER has opened his mouth again. When last he spoke, his Heaven-sent message stated that "no American should be allowed to suffer from starvation."

Dr. Hoover Puts Lydia to Shame

Since then, despite the celestial engineer's fiat, Americans have not only suffered but perished from starvation.

There are some who think that something should be done

about the matter. Senator LaFollette proved to be one of these. He spoke up for an extra session of Congress, to cease hiding official heads in the sands concerning unemployment.

Herbert turns his back on any such proposal. We must not interfere with "the healing process now going on," says he. Two days later the Wall Street stocks fall to new low levels. United States Steel and American Can run a close race for low place. The cream of industry follow suit: American Telephone and Telegraph, General Electric and so weiter.

Simultaneously come "healing" words from Chicago, via United Press. They are about wheat, and say:

Catastrophe apparently must come paradoxically to the aid of the wheat market if veritable mountains of golden grain awaiting purchase the world over are not to be made higher.

Unless unprecedented droughts or other disasters hit wheat now sprouting, dealers on the Chicago Board of Trade see a world's carryover at the end of the present "wheat year" on June 30 of approximately 600,000,000 bushels, almost 100,000,000 bushels more than last year's surplus and an excess over world needs of 350,000,000 bushels.

United States graineries and elevators are bulging with grain. Room must be found somewhere, somehow for the new crop.

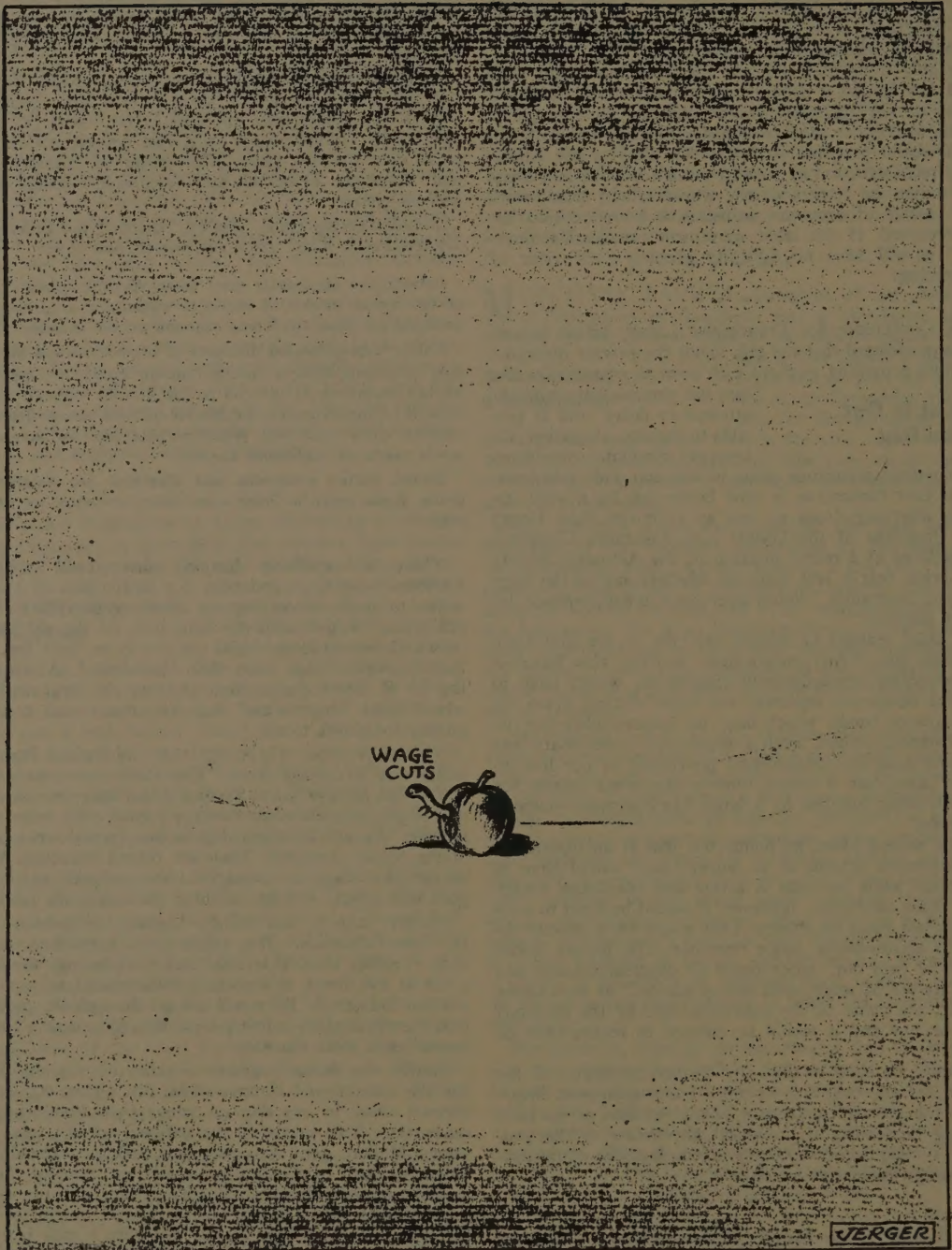
There is something dizzying about such economics. Farmers must hope and pray for destruction of crops in order to make something on those crops. While U. S. graineries "bulge" with the hang-over of the old harvest, men and women in the cities die slowly on their feet from lack of bread. None other than President J. A. Farrell of the U. S. Steel Corporation pictures the degradation to which West Virginia and Kentucky miners are now subjected, for a bite to eat.

On the very day (May 25) that the United Press dispatch was broadcast from "The Pit," cotton and wheat prices fell to new lows. So that bread may be more difficult to get, bankers continue their pressure for more wage-cutting. Warner Brothers, big motion picture crowd, balk at the banks' demands. They are forced into line. A new 20 per cent wage cut throughout the national organization goes into effect. A wage slashing panic hits the land.

Rather vaguely and vainly, captains of industry sigh for "new industries." They talk some of television. But that hope is rather slim. Television and aeroplaning, when they come in full force, will enter full-blossomed as mass production industries. They will not go through the processes that the automobile industry went through, to save the day immediately after the war.

Sourly, the divine engineer twiddles his thumbs. Relief for the unemployed is impossible. But \$3,000,000 can be thrown away in one day on worse than nonsensical air maneuvers. Two-thirds of the national income, says Secretary Mellon, goes into war and military expenditures. When we look to Kentucky, we can see some of the immediate reasons therefor. The desperate, starving miners are met with the National Guard. Unruly unemployed in the dark winter of 1931 can be met with bombs from the air.

As a physician of "Prosperity"—which he was touted to be when he sought the votes of the rugged individualists—Dr. Hoover puts Lydia Pinkham to shame. That great final architectural triumph of Capitalism—the President-Engineer—has sunk to "halting" world-wide depression by billboards and bunk.



Drawn for Labor Age by Jerger.

More Relief!

The Communists

and the Unions

By A. J. MUSTE

THE activities and policies of the Communist party of the U. S. and the Trade Union Unity League on the economic field are in a state of pitiful and almost complete collapse. You can take that from the Communists themselves. A recent issue of *Labor Unity*, one of their official organs, says: "The present period in the Communist movement is characterized by the widening of the gap between the radicalization of the masses and our ability to lead these masses in struggle." In the American language, just at the time when the workers ought to be and are ready for more radical activity, they are less ready than ever to follow the Communists, who have posed as the only true radicals in the movement.

A brief glimpse at the situation in the trade union movement will confirm this verdict of the Communists on their own failure. After two years of the greatest depression in this generation, the unemployment demonstrations of the T. U. U. L. rally fewer people than they did at the beginning of the depression. There is not one important industrial center in the country where there is today a genuine mass movement of the workers behind the Communist unemployment demonstrations.

A few years ago Communists wielded tremendous influence in important A. F. of L. and independent unions—the miners, the machinists, the carpenters, the textile workers, the garment workers' unions come to mind in that connection. Today there is not a single important A. F. of L. or independent union in which the Communist opposition exercises any considerable degree of power. Important movements are under way among the miners, in the anthracite, in Ohio, in West Virginia, in Illinois. In not a single one of them does the Communist movement play anything like the part which it played three or four years ago. Very little is left to show of all their activity in the South, dra-

(It is not the policy of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action to spend much time and strength in attacking or even criticising other progressive or radical elements in the labor movement. We believe it is better to give our energies to building up the labor movement, attacking reactionary elements in that movement when necessary, and keeping up a constant struggle against the capitalistic foes of labor. Sometimes, however, it becomes necessary to explain just where certain tendencies in the la-

bor movement lead and why we differ from them. The workers have a right to know what they are doing when they follow one group rather than another. We take, therefore, the opportunity of the Muste-Foster debate, described elsewhere in this issue, to present Chairman Muste's criticism of the policies and activities of the Communist party and its affiliated organizations on the economic or the trade union field. In our next issue, the C. P. L. A. policies in this field will be set forth.—Editor.)

matized so splendidly in many respects in the Gastonia struggle.

As for the garment trades' unions, which the Communists actually controlled a few years ago, the mass of the workers have gone back into the conservative unions, and the adherents of the T. U. U. L. itself in these trades are, with or without the approval of the Communist leaders, drifting back into the conservative unions.

Communist Unions Weak

As for the so-called industrial unions of the T. U. U. L. built since the Communist party adopted a new line a couple of years ago, all of these unions together do not have more than a handful of dues-paying members. In one or two instances, where these unions actually have contracts with employers, they are farcical affairs. There is an agreement, for example, with a cockroach dress manufacturers' association in New York City, headed, we are informed, by a relative of President Hyman of the Communist Dressmakers' Union. Recently this union undertook to call the dressmakers of New York City on strike. It was so weak, however, that it had to stoop to making an agreement with the association before the strike, assuring the latter that the strike would be a

mere gesture, and that after a few days the Communist union would settle with the manufacturers on terms fully as good as the supposedly conservative International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union would be able to offer them. Just fancy what the Communists would have said if the I. L. G. W. U. had employed similar tactics!

What is the explanation of this almost total failure of Communist policies and activities on the union field? In the first place, it is due to the fact that a couple of years ago the Communist movement abandoned almost entirely the policy of working inside the existing unions and trying to win them to a more militant activity, on which so much emphasis had been laid ever since 1921. Of course, the Communists are now beginning to argue that when they set about to build their own Communist unions, they never completely gave up or meant to give up the work of radicalizing the existing unions, and as usual they will have phrases in their theses to fall back upon in proof of their contention. We have it on their own admission, however, that for all practical purposes they have for the past couple of years given up the work in the old unions. The *Communist* for March, 1931, com-

menting on the present sad state of Communist influence among the workers, states: "This was due to a wrong policy of completely abandoning work inside the A. F. of L. unions, where these unions still contained large masses of workers."

In other words, William Z. Foster, who for years fervently denounced the tendency of American radicals to leave the mass organizations of the workers and go off by themselves in sectarian dual movements, in five minutes, in response to orders from Moscow, forgot, or at least abandoned, the work of a life time.

From the Communist point of view it may be a slight matter that they abandoned William Z. Foster's teachings. Much more serious is the fact that in doing so they were also going utterly contrary to some of the most explicit teachings of Lenin himself. In *Left Wing Communism* the latter had stated: "The development of the proletariat did not and could not anywhere in the world proceed by any other road than that of the trade unions with their mutual activity with a working class party." In the same work Lenin talks about the stupidity committed by certain would-be radical Communists, "when because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary heads of the trade unions, they jump by some inexplicable mental process to the conclusion that it is necessary to abandon these organizations altogether! They refuse to work in them! This is an unpardonable blunder and one by which the Communists render the greatest service to the bourgeoisie."

Lenin's Warning Unheeded

The reasons given by the Communists for abandoning their old policy of boring-from-within the A. F. of L. and independent unions are weak. Talk to a rank and file left-winger, and he will usually tell you that the Communists had to set about building their own unions because it had become so hard to work in the old unions, so many leaders and members were expelled, etc. Unfortunately for the Communists themselves, Lenin had warned them that they would meet with just exactly such difficulties, and that in spite of them they must continue to work inside the conservative organizations where the masses are to be found. For example: "In order to be able to help the mass and win their sympathy, confidence and support, it is necessary to brave all difficulties, attacks, insults, cavils and persecutions by the leaders . . . and to work by every possible means wherever the

masses are to be found. Great sacrifices must be made, the greatest hindrances must be overcome, in order to carry the agitation and propaganda systematically, stubbornly, insistently and patiently into all those institutions, societies and associations, however reactionary, where proletarians or semi-proletarians gather together."

It is an exhibition of curious weakness and childish petulance for a group to break off into a faction simply because it has come up against obstacles. The difficulty of pursuing the right line in the trade union movement certainly can never justify abandoning that line. Suppose that a few years ago, after the disastrous strike in the I. L. G. W. U., and the break-up for the time being of the Communist leadership, the masses of the workers had been sent into the I. L. G. W. U., as could have been done, how much more control the left wing might have in that industry now? Certainly it could not be any weaker than it is today.

Communist leaders will usually tell you that they had to give up the work in the old unions because conditions in the economic and political field were changing, capitalism was headed for the depression and the crisis in which it now finds itself, the A. F. of L. unions were becoming more and more reactionary and practically "agencies of the bosses." A right wing dictatorship, they will tell you, has been established in practically all of the A. F. of L. unions. They have become Fascitized. There is no doubt that such tendencies are at work in many of the A. F. of L. and independent unions. Whether they justify abandoning work in those organizations is quite another matter. To quote Lenin again, even after the Bolshevik revolution had taken place, he insisted that his followers continue to work in the conservative unions and stated: "To fear this reactionary tendency (in unions), to try to fight it, to jump over it, is as foolish as it can possibly be; it indicates a lack of confidence in the role of the proletarian vanguard to train, to educate and enlighten, to infuse with new life the most backward groups and masses of the working class."

The tendency toward reaction in the old unions became so strong, partly, at least, just because of the asinine tactics pursued by the "left wing" while it was still tolerated in those unions. There were artificial and premature attempts to "capture" organizations, and then the Communists found that they had captured only themselves. Splitting tactics were pursued even while

lip service was given to "the united front." The actual requirements of the workers in a particular situation and industry were subordinated to the ups and downs of Communist party politics, as for example, in calling strikes in needle trades' unions, when the conditions in the industry and among the workers were dead against the success of such a move. There was, as we shall point out in greater detail later, a contempt for the rank and file of the workers, covered up by nice-sounding phrases about rank and file control. There was trickery and vituperation, even gangsterism—exactly the same kind of methods employed by the left wing as it criticized in right wing leaders. The whole emphasis was on attempting to impose Communist doctrines on the workers, rather than winning the confidence of the workers by giving them honest and intelligent leadership in their actual struggles.

"Left Wing" Deserts

The "left wing" has now deserted these organizations, and so far as it is in its power, has left the masses in the hands of leaders whom it regards as reactionary and corrupt. How can that help to overcome right wing tendencies in these organizations?

Most important of all, any policy, particularly on the economic or trade union field, must after all justify itself by actual results. Now, what are the actual results of the recent policies of the Communist party and the T. U. U. L.? The masses are still in the old A. F. of L. and independent unions. The new Communist unions have nowhere achieved any results or given promise of being able to do so. The militants still have to be where the workers are, even if that is in reactionary organizations.

In the second place, the Communists have weakened their influence in the unions and among the workers generally by adopting the policy of building their own dual unions. Now, it is not necessarily a sin to build dual unions. The A. F. of L., for example, is a means and not an end in itself. It was itself at one time a dual organization. It is possible that it may sometime disintegrate, or have to be removed from the scene. Certainly in these days militants have to take the initiative in promoting the organization of the unorganized, so largely neglected by the existing unions. It is even theoretically conceivable that in certain countries and in certain situations it may be advisable to have two trade union federations—a right and a left—operate side by side for a time.

We are talking, however, about today and about the United States, where the elementary task of getting the workers into any kind of a union has still for the most part to be accomplished. In this situation the Communist movement for building a series of dual unions is a blunder which is worse than a sin or a crime.

In the first place, the wrong moment was chosen for building these independent industrial unions. The policy was decided upon just when the Communists were losing their influence, largely because of their own wrong-headed tactics, in the unions. Under those circumstances, to move off and build new unions was simply a gesture of despair. Ten years ago, or five or even two years, three months, six days and five hours ago, William Z. Foster would have known that this was no way to accomplish the amalgamation of the workers, or to build effective new unions.

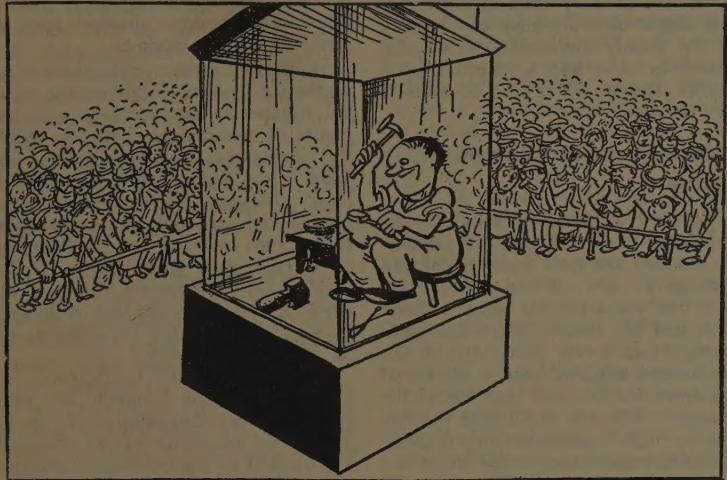
Worst of all, the new unions are sectarian organizations. Therefore, they are not unions but Communist sewing-circles. To all intents and purposes, in order to join a T. U. U. L. union, certainly in order to be permitted to exercise any real activity and leadership in it, you have to accept the Communist program. To what an absurdity this sectarian tendency may go in the hands of such caricatures of revolutionists as constitute the Communist party at the present time, is illustrated by one of their own statements in *Labor Unity* for April 4, 1931: "The . . . policy at our recent strikes was carried out in the most sectarian manner, by making it a condition that the workers join the T. U. U. L. union, in order to join the strike!" If this policy is to be made permanent and workers are actually to be forbidden to go on strike unless they are first prepared pactly to sign the whole Communist creed, then the Communist movement will furnish the employers of the United States about the most perfect insurance against strikes that has yet been devised!

To give another illustration of the absurd lengths to which Communists have recently gone in the effort to make their so-called industrial unions and their party one and the same thing, the *Communist* for March, 1931, confesses: "In the single strike called in the Pittsburgh region, we found that the miners were told to fight for the six-hour day and for a workers' and farmers' government, while the grievances that led to the strike were either forgotten or put into the background."

Sectarian Unions Doomed

Unions are mass organizations of workers to protect their rights on the job and to gain certain immediate ends. The only legitimate condition for membership in a union is that a worker shall be employed in the trade or industry over which the union has jurisdiction. No other religious, political, economic, etc., requirements can be laid down for union membership.

many of the leaders of the unions and of the party itself. A few years ago a couple of party members from Paterson came to me and urged that something be done to bring the A. F. of L. and the independent unions among the silk workers in that city together. I agreed to help because I believe firmly in the policy of united action in industrial matters. The effort to bring the various organizations together succeeded. Weeks and months



The hand-worker, a British paper thinks, may soon become a curiosity. But so may the employed worker of any kind, under Capitalism

Whatever may be the case elsewhere, or at some other time, no trade union movement can flourish in the United States today under the domination of the Communist party or any other political party. The union must have its own life and organization, just as a working-class political party must have its own life and organization. Neither can flourish if it is merely a puppet of the other. And this does not mean that the two are not parts of one and the same labor movement, and must not and do not legitimately exercise influence upon each other.

In attempting to build sectarian Communist unions, the Communists have certainly rendered no service either to their own particular cause or to the general advancement of the workers in this country.

In the next place, the Communist tactics on the economic field have failed because party policies have been applied in an artificial, childish, mechanical fashion. Changes are made over night in particular situations, confusing the workers, confusing the members of the unions, confusing even

were spent in adopting a basis for amalgamation. Practically every important paragraph in the amalgamation plan was written by the left wing comrades themselves. It was their plan. Finally came the night when the full joint committees of the two organizations involved met for final adoption of the plan which had been unanimously agreed on by the sub-committees. Every separate article in the plan was adopted as read. After every separate item of the plan drawn up, as we have indicated, mainly by left wingers, had thus been approved by the joint committee, the foremost representative of the left wing on the joint committee arose and said that he was afraid when the matter actually came up to be voted on before his organization, he would have to vote against it. He gave some lame reason for his statement, which was obviously mere camouflage. The actual reason was that just about that time the Communist party had adopted its new line, decided to quit working in the old unions, and to start new ones of its own. Surely whatever justification

there could have been for this new line generally, there could not possibly be any justification for the abandonment of an amalgamation move in a particular situation, just as it had succeeded. If a new union had to be built for the silk workers, why not attempt to swing the newly amalgamated union in that direction, rather than perpetuating a split in the ranks of the workers after months of painful effort to remove the split?

At the present time Communists sometimes actually raise opposition to the slogan of a six-hour day because of the utterly mechanical notion that that is in some way a reflection upon Soviet Russia where the seven-hour day obtains!

Bureaucracy in Communist Unions

In the last place, the activities and policies of the T. U. U. L. on the economic field are in a state of collapse because in spite of the fine phrases used for years by left wingers about rank and file control, there has come to the front in the party, and in organizations affiliated with it, an actual contempt for the rank and file of the workers. This has resulted in the setting-up in the Communist unions themselves of bureaucracy of the worst and most tyrannical sort. Within these organizations there is persecution of people not for things they have done but for opinions which they hold. The very evils which the Communists for years attacked in the old unions, and on the basis of their fight against which they appealed for the allegiance of the workers, they have permitted to flourish in their own midst. So disastrous has this policy been that after all their bitter attacks upon democracy of every kind, they are now actually in their own organs crying for the re-establishment of "trade union democracy."

To cite their own version of the matter again, in the Lawrence strike some weeks ago, according to *Labor Unity*, the Communist leaders "failed to give more than formal recognition to the rank and file workers who came on strike." In the same organ occurs the confession: "The lack of democracy in the T. U. U. L. unions and leagues prevails everywhere."

In the March issue of the *Communist* we read: "In the first place, instead of rightly proposing the united front of the workers, raising slogans tending to develop the initiative and control of the rank and file against

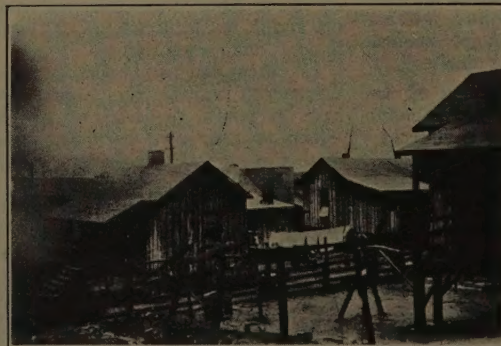
the reformist leaders, our comrades thought that they carried through the united front by merely denouncing the leaders, the A. F. of L. unions and asking the workers to join the T. U. U. L." The article goes on to state that in a miners' strike in Illinois led by left wing elements, the strikers actually did not receive the leaflet stating the strike demands until after they had quit work! Could contempt for the rank and file of the workers go further than that? In Philadelphia, it is confessed, a small group of mostly non-marine workers decided upon a strike of marine workers.

William Z. Foster, in the same issue of the *Communist*, continues the painful confession of rottenness and betrayal of the rank and file of which the Communists have been guilty. "In some cases union constitutions have been changed, leaders have been elected and removed, and even strike calls issued without the development of a real mass participation in the taking of such important actions. And, needless to add, similar bad tendencies have crept into other departments of the Party's mass work."

Opposition of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action to the present reactionary leadership of the A. F. of L. and of many of its affiliated unions, and to the reactionary policies which to so large an extent prevail in the trade union movement today, is well known. If, however, the Communist party and the T. U. U. L. continue along the line which they have been pursuing in recent years, and which we have briefly sketched in this article, they will actually be more effective agencies for preventing the victory of the workers in the United States than the A. F. of L. itself. Because of their support from Russia, to mention no other reasons, Communist organizations are bound to continue to be a more or less important

factor in the American scene. With their present policy of trying to build narrow sectarian Communist unions and bitterly opposing the efforts of others in seeking to organize the unorganized in the basic industries, they are actually doing everything they can to make impossible the building of genuine militant industrial unions in this country. That is a serious matter. To use Communist language, "it is playing into the hands of counter-revolutionaries."

What we have in the United States today is a small percentage of workers organized in trade unions. To a very large extent these unions are conservative, even reactionary, in many instances corrupt, and tending, whether they are conscious of it or not, toward helping employers to build a Fascist movement in this country. On the other extreme we have a small revolutionary left wing movement. According to its own admission, it is isolated today from the masses of the workers. There is nothing, to speak of, between this extreme right wing and this extreme left wing. Let this condition continue, and then let some crisis—a big depression or a war—arise, and that isolated left wing movement will in no time be wiped out in blood, and the reactionary right wing of labor will help the powers-that-be to do that, and then we shall have in this country the bloodiest, most extreme, blackest dictatorship of capital to be found anywhere in the world. The responsibility for such a calamity will rest fully as much upon the colossal and idiotic mistakes of "left wing" leadership as upon the reactionary tendencies of their opponents of the right.



**Longacre,
Main
Kanawha
River,
West Va.**

Miner's Houses

Note Smoke
from
Coke Ovens

Coal War in Kentucky

By TESS HUFF

THERE have been no more killings here since the Evarts fight in which four were killed and two wounded. Recently there was a widespread rumor that a miner and a guard had shot each other to death, but those in charge of civil and military affairs deny it.

However, there is great danger of another and perhaps more bloody outbreak between the law and the workers, as the situation, since the arrival of the soldiers, who the miners at first thought were to help them, becomes more aggravated daily.

There are 100 prisoners in jail now, about half them miners and miners' friends who have been framed or legitimately arrested on charges resulting from the class struggle.

Judge Jones, a whale of a man, over six feet tall, with a big mouth that turns down at the corners, dismissed an entire term of court in order to give his time and attention to dicker-ing with the grand jury that returned a raft of indictments against miners and their leaders, but not a single indictment against pistol deputies and company guards who have beat up, shot at and abused scores of miners without provocation.

These hirelings of the operators have punched miners with pistols until their bellies and breasts bled; they have thrown them out of company postoffices where they had gone to get their mail; and, at the point of pistols, they have made them wade rivers and creeks just for the "fun of it." Strenuous efforts were made by friends of the miners to have the grand jury indict these bullies, but the grand jury, dominated by Judge Jones, refused to return indictments.

Jones is in a frenzy against the miners. In his race for judge he was opposed by the miners, who supported Grant Forester, former judge of the Harlan circuit court. Backed 100 per cent by the operators and their henchmen, who deliberately and openly forced thousands of miners to vote for Jones by intimidation and threats, Jones was still beaten—nobody here but will tell you that Grant Forester was elected judge—and yet Jones is Judge. The Harlan County Coal Operators Association takes by force

and by courts what the people refuse to give it.

Fight at Drop of Hat

But there is a limit to human endurance, even the endurance of starving and oppressed coal miners. The 45,000 miners of Harlan country, as well as hundreds of others, have been crushed, brow-beaten and robbed to such an extent, and for so long, that two-thirds of the people are on the verge of civil war or rebellion. They are fired by mortal hatred of their oppressors, and will fight at the drop of a hat.

The operators and the law know this, which no doubt partly accounts for the brutal measures they are using. The sheriff, John Henry Blair, the county judge, Hamp Howard, and the circuit judge, D. C. "Baby" Jones, have shown that they will stop at nothing in their efforts to defeat the miner's attempt to organize. They mean to do a quick clean job. For with a little help from the outside public sentiment would burst into the open, and it would be mighty hot for the sheriff, the judges and their gunmen.

In fact these three men—others too of course, but these three especially—are very much worried lest they be shot. And their fears are justified. Many miners will tell you openly that they would be only too willing to "swap out" in order to kill either of them.

This feeling is not confined to miners, either. Since labor leaders and Joe Cawood have been jailed and denied bond a quite different hornet's nest has been stirred up, and the old timers are now becoming interested. These men are in the habit of settling things outside the courts.

Consequently the situation gets tenser hourly, and the lid would blow off immediately if the militia should be withdrawn. But the militia are here to stay awhile; they are here for two purposes—to protect the "law" which is out to bust the union, and to see that everything goes off according to "law and order" in the wholesale eviction of miners from company houses under judgements on yellow dog contracts.

Strange as it may seem, the militia was sent in at the request of district officials of the United Mine Workers of America. These union officials joined with representatives of Governor Sampson in an agreement that the governor should send state troops to Harlan to restore and maintain order, and that the armed guards should be disarmed and that the miners should have the right to join the union and hold meetings in the day-time.

But it did not take long for the miners to learn the real purpose of the troops, although they had been duped by Governor Sampson's gesture of friendliness at the start. They now know that the troops are in Harlan to protect the interests of the operators and to see that the law of Judge Jones is carried out. Since this has always been the role of the militia in labor disputes it appears to the writer that the officials of the U. M. W. of A. acted very foolishly—if nothing worse can be said—in heeding the fine words of Governor Sampson.

The Militia Enter

The manner in which the state troops came into Evarts is perhaps significant. They apparently thought that they were dealing with desperate men and that their lives were in great danger. The captains took every precaution in going around curves and in crossing bridges. They came in on a train—a long string of empty flat cars in front, then gondolas for the infantry, and last the cabooses for the machine-gunners.

They remained in Evarts until the special grand jury had returned enough indictments to jail union leaders, whom they proceeded to arrest; that good work being accomplished they were scattered over the county, until now they patrol 20 mining towns.

The captains and colonels fare fine at the Lewallen Hotel in Harlan, hobnob with operators and preachers and politicians.

"I do not understand how the coal operators can recognize the union," said Col. Daniel Carrell, head of the troops, to the writer a few days ago. "I have a business in Louisville in which I employ 100 men. I wouldn't recognize the union—I couldn't."

"But have the operators a right to fire men because they belong to a union?"

"Certainly," replied the Colonel. "Haven't the men a right to quit work if they want to? Doesn't the rule work both ways?"

Personally, Carrell is not a bad sort, but he seems to be dominated by Lieut. Col. Sidney Smith, second in command, and chief counsel for the Louisville and Nashville railroad.

"These damned miners thought we came here to help them," sneered this up-standing American to the writer. He then put his arm about the shoulder of a coal operator and the two left the room.

all of whom were baptized. In speaking to 1500 miners from the steps of the courthouse at Harlan recently he said: "I have seen thousands of tombstones and have preached hundreds of funerals, but I have yet to see the grave of anyone who starved to death while fighting a righteous cause."

He described the condition of the miners as one of misery and slavery, and said that women and children were starving. He plead with the rich to open their eyes and soften their hearts.

Gill Green, a colored orator and labor leader, a witty old fellow of 67, was slapped into jail 4 weeks ago for

Evarts fight. They were a sort of committee from Evarts. They asked the sheriff to send the town of Evarts some protection against the armed guards of the Black Mountain Coal Company. A few minutes after they left, the news of the fight reached the sheriff and Gill has been in jail ever since.

Leaders Framed-Up

Nobody in the county doubts that these men are all the victims of a frame-up. Martin, Green, Hightower, Jones and Cawood are innocent of any crime, unless attempting to organize and aid the starving miners is a crime.



**Labor
War
Ruins,
Cawood, Ky.**

Remains of 16
Houses in Region
Where Miners
Are Fighting for
Food

Twenty indictments have been returned against miners on triple murder charges, and 15 of them have been jailed. Rev. Frank Martin, who spoke for the miners and urged them to organize, has been jailed on a charge of criminal syndicalism.

Jailing Rev. Martin

Martin, who is pastor of the Baptist church at Ages, is innocent, of course, but he is an impressive man, a good orator, and a real friend of the people, so they popped him into jail. While helping the miners in their efforts to organize he conducted a revival and had over a hundred converts,

absolutely nothing, that is no charges were brought against him.

"Who is it that's doing all this shooting?" asked Green, in speaking to a group of miners a few days before he was jailed. "I'll tell you. They have their heads out of a window listening to me right now."

The sheriff and some of his gunmen were listening to Gill not 15 feet away.

"They are with the operators," he shouted at them, "and why shouldn't they be? The operators bought and paid for them on election day."

His arrest came this way: with two other men, white, he called on the sheriff at his office the morning of the

And apparently the "law" in Harlan county does consider it a crime.

At least Judge Jones, who is married to the daughter of one of the big operators, and who is said to be financially interested in a number of coal mines in the county, has refused to vacate the bench, and it does not look as if he can be compelled. With him on the bench the jailed miners have absolutely no chance.

"Judge Jones and sheriff Blair have formed a monarchy to rule Harlan county," says Joe Cawood, one of the 15 who are being held without bond on a triple murder charge. "Sheriff Blair is the Kaiser, and Judge Jones is

a rich man. They are the willing tools of the coal operators."

Cawood, a stocky, well built man of perhaps 35, of a prominent family, is known in Harlan as the miner's candidate for sheriff. He claims, and with good reason, that he has been framed because he is a friend of the miners in their struggle to organize.

"They are trying to get me out of the way," he says. "Judge Jones is a bitter enemy of mine. No wonder he refused to vacate the bench or give us bond.

"It's a trick to break the union. They mean to keep us in jail. They would like to destroy my political power. They know I was nominated for sheriff by a majority of 900 votes last election, and it frightened them stiff. They threw the election out, but they don't want to see that happen again.

"The week before the fight I was elected trustee of the Evarts graded school district. I got 501 votes. My nearest opponent got 166. There are 1200 pupils in the district schools; that shows what the people think of me.

"When the shooting started I was in the heart of Evarts. I ran home to get out of the way of the bullets which were flying everywhere. Everybody saw me.

"The machine guns of the guards fired the first shots, and they killed a miner. But the monarch didn't indict the guards. They are after the miners. They want to exterminate us, I reckon."

Some of the largest mines in the county are owned by foreign capital—Andrew Mellon, Commonwealth Edison, and Sam Insull are large holders of mining property. None of them recognize the union, and all of them fire men as fast as they join the union.

Can the starving miners of Harlan county win against these great powers? Perhaps, but they need help, and immediately.

* * *

News Item: The Commonwealth Edison Company lends Chicago \$2,000,000, so city officials will get pay due May 16.

Open Letter to Matthew Woll

Unemployed Chapel N. Y. Photo-Engravers' Union No. 1

From out of the largest local in Matthew Woll's own union comes the request to print this open letter, criticizing Woll's statements on prohibition and the tariff. The unemployed chapel of Local 1, which adopted this letter, claims a membership of 532 mechanics and 40 helpers. One of the members of Local 1 stated that "It is high time for Woll to halt his oratorical excursions to Russia and face the open shop situation in his own city of Chicago."

Mr. Matthew Woll,
Acting President N. C. F.,
Third Vice-President A. F. of L.

Dear Sir and Brother:

What have you done or contemplated doing to solve the unemployment problem? We trust that, unlike that other poser—how can you serve two masters at once—put to you by James H. Maurer, this question will not go unanswered.

It seems to us that your activities are either futile, as in the field of prohibition, or have actually aggravated the situation, as your agitation for an embargo against Russian products and a very high tariff wall against the rest of the world behind which the great open-shop and highly monopolized manufacturing interests can safely practice their extortion upon the nation's wage earners.

The over-reaching capacity of these in-

terests proved their undoing, and in your collaboration with them you proved yourself a positive detriment to the American workers. Nations inclined toward free trade and others, according to their industries the utmost protection, are alike passing thru a severe economic crisis.

To demonstrate how asinine and fatuous is the supposition that tariffs either create or preserve prosperity, the United States, with the highest tariff in its history, is passing thru its greatest depression. Some of the highly protected industries foster company unionism, pay low wages and often sell their products at fifteen times the cost of production.

Some amazing statistics, recently published, disclosed that 504 individuals in the country had an aggregate annual income of more than one billion dollars while 1,106,976 factory workers in New York State received a total of \$1,651,133,696.

The tariff has operated, because of consequential retaliation, to exclude our products from foreign markets. Numerous American manufacturers have set up plants in foreign countries in order to escape retaliatory tariffs, and produce not only for internal distribution in those countries, but for export as well in direct competition with American products. An industry in point is the American automobile industry in Canada.

The sole utility of the tariff accrues to the manufacturer; it enables him in times of prosperity to maintain high prices, thereby depriving the workers of the only benefit of high wages, which are mainly confined to a few highly organized crafts while about 90 per cent of the nation's workers are either in company unions or work under non-union conditions and are in a state of economic servility that cannot be differentiated from that which you so blatantly allege to exist in Russia.

Any reform in the field of prohibition will merely regularize an already flourishing industry. As a remedy for unemployment, even in part, prohibition reform is merely a red herring. Contrariwise, it is possible that to legalize the manufacture and distribution of intoxicants would be to aggravate unemployment as concentration and scientific mass production would set in and fewer people would be able to make their living selling intoxicants. henog

The country went thru severe industrial depression before prohibition, and other capitalistic nations which have not become involved in this noble experiment are now as much depressed as we.

Nothing above should be construed as a defense of prohibition, for we are utterly opposed to it. In short we want employment, we want beer; but we don't want any red herring.

The very fundamentals upon which the labor movement is based are involved in the unemployment problem. The history of a hundred years of capitalism with its regularly recurring periodic collapses demonstrates beyond all doubt its utter incompetence to eliminate economic crises, not to mention the large total of unemployment due to technological progress and other minor causes.

We know that the officialdom of the A. F. of L. does not subscribe to the theory that capitalism cannot within the scope of its own principles, eliminate unemployment. It is surprising how many other matters conducive to the progress and well being of labor to which that same officialdom does not subscribe, to wit, a labor party, industrial unionism, social insurance and judging from the progress it is making in organizing the unorganized, numbering easily 35,000,000 workers, and curbing the equity jurisdiction of the judiciary in labor disputes, we are impelled to conclude that it does not subscribe to either organizing the workers or curbing the courts. American labor has been supposedly fighting injunctions since 1894, and since that time the workers of England have organized a political party which comes pretty close to challenging successfully the capitalists for supremacy in that nation.

(Continued on page 29)

"Strike!" —Mansfield Steel Workers

By A STEEL WORKER

COME on, let's quit!" were the shouts which shook the walls of the old North plant of the Mansfield, O., works of the Empire Steel Corporation on May 12. Before nightfall all 1,800 men had pulled the steel from their furnaces, discarded their tools and were on strike.

No one seems to know how it started. There had been no meeting of the men nor were there any labor "agitators" about the town that anyone knew anything about. It all happened when some of the workers had gone out to the mill gate and spied a notice posted by the company declaring another 10 per cent wage cut. These men rushed back into the plant and spread the latest news and the walk-out followed.

This was the second cut handed to all of the workers of this plant since the first of May and it was to be retroactive taking effect May 1st with the other 5 per cent announced then. In all, these workers had suffered the loss of something over 37 per cent of their wages since a year and a half ago.

It was rather significant that little or no protest was raised by the workers over a period of 18 months when the company had reduced their wages almost 25 per cent. But times were bad and there was some danger of losing their homes if a strike was called and the mill shut down. Most of the workers employed by the Empire Steel are white Americans, many of them having been with the company since 1915 when Bill Davy, an old roller himself, had first opened the Mansfield plant. From the very first Davy would have nothing to do with unions but he would take care of his men. And for a time he did. The war came along with its unlimited demand for steel sheets and the plant worked full blast day and night. Prices were high and wages reached an undreamed peak. When the crash came after the war it caught Davy in the midst of an expansion and remodeling program. The storm was weathered with the aid of Cleveland capital. The workers were forced to fall back on their meager savings, that is those who had been able to save. Others had mortgaged their homes or borrowed

when they could. The company loaned money to some of the more "worthy." For years the company had helped its workers out of trouble. At first it made gifts outright in case of sickness, later the gifts were converted into loans. The Davys had tried to take care of their workers.

Things Different Now

But things are different now. The Mansfield plant is just one of six which were merged together in 1928 to form the Empire Steel Corporation and the 5th largest sheet steel company in the country. The ambitious Bill Davy catching the spirit of the times bought up three plants in Niles, O., one in Ashtabula and Cleveland and combined the original Mansfield plant to form the Corporation with assets totaling over \$23,000,000. But things did not go so well with the new Empire Corporation. Bill was too generous. He had placed five of his brothers in high executive positions with exorbitant salaries. The smaller stockholders raised a voice of protest, other executives were jealous and the workers were becoming restive. So last year Pickand, Mather and Company, a huge Cleveland ore concern, purchased Bill Davy's controlling interest. Now the Davys are no longer a part of the Empire Steel. Although the president of the company, Carl Hinkel, is a local Mansfield man, the Cleveland capitalists control the corporation. This same company, Pickand, Mather and Co., figured greatly in the recent merger trial in Youngstown which was waged between the Youngstown, Sheet and Tube and Bethlehem Steel interests and the Eaton capitalists of Cleveland. Pickand, Mather took sides with S. and T and Bethlehem in favor of the merger. It was brought out in the trial that Pickand, Mather had purchased something over \$9,000,000 worth of Sheet and Tube stock for Bethlehem. And Bethlehem is one of Pickand, Mather's best ore customers.

These two companies own several ore companies jointly.

Things are different now. When the workers walked-out May 12 they challenged not the Davy family but a combination of capitalists with unknown resources. But the workers did not stop to think about all of this until after they had closed the plant tightly. They had stood for the first 25 per cent reductions but the last 15 per cent was, "the last straw," the straw which broke the camel's back. "We would rather die fighting, than starve working," was the way they put it the first evening of the strike at a huge mass meeting.

The Mansfield workers knew little about strikes or how they were run. They called in officers of the Local Trades Council for assistance. Committees were formed and demands drawn up to be submitted to the company. Some old time members of the A. F. of L., Amalgamated Association of Iron Steel and Tin Workers Union, got in touch with the Pittsburgh officials asking for assistance. The Communist Metal Workers Industrial League sent in representatives. Officials of the company were sitting tight waiting to hear the demands of their workers. Pickets were placed at the plant gates, although unnecessary, for no one cared to go back to work until the strike was settled. There was no sign of violence anywhere.

All through the second day of the strike the steel worker held department meetings to discuss the demands which were to be submitted to the company. The grievances had long expanded. The return of the last 15 per cent wage reduction became only one of many demands. The workers wanted an 8-hour day for the hot mills and the elimination of Sunday work. In the past they had received no pay for "cut-downs" and "seconds"; they

wanted pay for these. The laborers were asking for 40 cents an hour instead of the 32 cents they were receiving. Many other items concerning the conditions of work were being talked over. All of these were agreed to and incorporated in the "terms" under which they were willing to return to work.

Union?

But there was one fundamental issue over which there waged much controversy. Were the strikers to demand the right to have a union? During the first couple days opinion was all but unanimous for a union. They reasoned that unless they had a union they would have no protection in the future. To be sure the men had walked-out, but the next time it would not be so easy without some form of organization. Officers of the Amalgamated Association were in their midst ready to take them into the fold. A huge mass meeting was held and over 1000 men voted to sign the A. A. pledge. A few did sign but the supply of pledge cards became exhausted and they were told to come around to the union hall on the following day when there would be more cards available. Then, too, a five dollar initiation fee must be given.

But over night something happened. Union officials were on hand with

pledge cards, but the men were not signing. Committee meetings were held, and after long debate it was decided to have nothing to do with the A. A. for the time being. The strikers were in favor of asking for the right to organize locally. It was rumored about that the company was in financial straits due to the fact that something like \$800,000 worth of bonds had matured and the banks had refused to renew them. Strike leaders feared that to hold out for recognition of the International Union would mean defeat since they were quite certain that the company would not consent to pay the union scale of wages which was 30 to 35 per cent higher than their rates. Then, too, the citizens of Mansfield who had been shocked when the strike became known, were circulating the opinion that to prolong the strike would mean the breaking of the company and the ultimate stoppage of all production by the Empire Steel Corporation in Mansfield. This, they believed, would ruin the town since the Empire pay roll amounted to nearly \$200,000 each month. So the A. A. officials were asked to quietly withdraw.

Strike Is Won!

After four days the peaceful strike came to an end. The company re-

scinded the last two wage cuts and restored the April 30 scale. The workers compromised and accepted a 36 cent rate for the laborers. All other demands were held in abeyance until a committee composed of workers and representatives of the employers could get together to talk them over.

The Mansfield steel workers had won against the company's wage cuts. They have the promise of a grievance committee which will discuss other grievances. It remains a question, now that the men are back on their jobs, just how effective the workers can be without a union.

No matter what happens in the future it still remains a fact that the complacent Mansfield steel workers struck and defeated the Empire Steel Corporation's wage cutting program. These workers have set a precedent for all other wage earners in the steel industry throughout Ohio and the country at large. All of the larger steel corporations have initiated brutal wage cutting campaigns and it is a good guess that the Mansfield strike will give them something to warrant more caution in the future. Already other workers in other plants are beginning to ask themselves why they cannot do what the Mansfield workers have done.

MILITANT RADICALS

Militant radicals who espouse the Muste cause may not be willing to wait for the slow methods imposed by political action, says Henry Elmer Barnes in editorial for Scripps-Howard papers.

John Dewey has recently set forth in the *New Republic* the conceptions of an advanced progressive relative to the desirability and possibility of a third party. In *LABOR AGE* for April, A. J. Muste, head of Brookwood College and of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, presents the notions of a sane radical on the same subject. Muste thus summarizes his requirements for such a party:—

(1) The political party we need must have a class basis (the industrial workers).

(2) The political party we need must be out to do away with the present capitalist economy and unplanned individualistic chaos of our present economic life, and to substitute for it a planned economy under the control of the workers and operated not for the benefit of private individuals or groups but of the mass of those who do the creative work of the world.

(3) The political party we need must have a sound attitude toward Soviet Russia (recognition of but no dictation from Russia).

(4) The political party we need must have a correct attitude toward the problem of the organization of the workers upon the economic field into industrial unions.

(5) The political party we need must think through and define its attitude toward parliamentary methods and toward the thing we call democracy (rely upon political methods until they prove futile in the cause of social justice).

(6) The political party we need must be realistic and must grow out of the American soil.

Neither the Communist nor the Socialist party, as at present organized and operating in the United States, seems to Muste to measure up to these six specifications.

It is doubtful that the country will

prove receptive to such proposals until it has undergone another generation of near starvation and economic oppression.

I pointed out a short time back that even John Dewey's moderate proposals for a third party movement and platform were probably too realistic and intelligent to attract any considerable support in the face of the docility of the American populace and the hypnotism of the partisan shibboleths. These handicaps would probably be far more notable in the case of Mr. Muste's uncompromising economic radicalism.

Such a party as that envisaged by Muste would constitute for the time being a minority fourth party of radical propaganda and education. Indeed, he himself admits that such might well be its fate and destiny for some years.

Of one thing we may be reasonably certain. Unless a party embodying the platform of Norris, Dewey, Norman Thomas, (Continued on page 29)

Organization Comes

to the

Brooklyn Edison

By S. W. LEVICH

SEVERAL months ago the Brooklyn Edison Company laid off 1,600 men and continued to lay off men until the total is now well over 2,000. These men were laid off in the face of the many indications of worsening conditions, particularly in the Borough of Brooklyn, where there is admitted to be "more unemployment as a unit . . . than in any other city in the country, with the possible exception of Chicago." (F. H. Kracke, Appraiser of the Port of New York, May 4, 1931). To meet this serious problem in an effective manner is certainly no easy matter.

As a preliminary to the lay-off, the company instituted a most intensive speed-up which began about August, 1930. The time required for certain jobs was cut down by one-half and even one-third. A change-over job, installing a service switch, complete frame, filling a gap between service switch and splice box, filling a gap of forty feet three-wire No. 8 from service switch to meter cabinets, rewiring bus for four meter cabinets, running a thirty-five foot ground to the water main, and filling out the various forms and red tape required by the company, all of which ordinarily would take from sixteen to twenty solid hours for completion. Formerly laborers were assigned to subservice work to dig trenches and break through walls. Now this work was given over to mechanics and helpers, while the number of hours allotted to the job, was cut down by one-half. Ratting and spying, already a part of the Edison system, was intensified. Spotters, unknown to the men, were sent out to the various jobs to watch the men and report them to the office for the slightest offense.

In my own gang, on one occasion, when the foreman was attending a foremen's meeting the roll call was taken about two minutes before five and the men rushed away. For this terrible crime, we were all reported to the office by a spotter who, we were later informed by the foreman, was hiding behind the bushes. One man came to work with low shoes instead of the regulation high shoes, which he was having repaired. He was immediately sent to the office and fired. While demanding breakneck speed on the job, the company simultaneously

insisted upon the men wearing heavy clumsy gloves for handling the most delicate instruments and screws. The men were hauled on the carpet for the slightest infraction of the rules and were fired on the slightest excuse.

The much advertised welfare system was also a cause of deep discontent. The insurance money collected from the men brought little if any benefit in return. Few died of old age in the Edison company. They were fired long before and of course lost their insurance with their jobs. Those who collect for total disability are rare. The whole scheme is plainly a racket. I well remember my own experience with the Edison welfare department, which is advertised widely in all company literature. While working on a certain installation job, I was almost suffocated by the fumes from an adjacent, leaky gas meter. I got so sick that I had to be taken to a clinic for treatment, and then the company doctor advised me to stay home for three days. When pay day came around I was docked three days' pay.

We are up against one of the most powerful corporations in the United States, the Brooklyn Edison Company being part of the great New York State Power and utilities combine. The Consolidated Gas Company controls 98 per cent of the Brooklyn Edison Company stock. On the Board of Directors of the Consolidated Gas Company which interlocks closely with the Brooklyn Edison are such men as: George Whitney of J. P. Morgan & Co., Charles E. Mitchell of the National City Bank, Percy A. Rockefeller, John D. Ryan of the Anaconda Copper Co., Floyd L. Carlisle, chairman of the New York Edison Company, George B. Cortelyou, president of the Consolidated Gas Company, and

Matthew S. Sloan. The Brooklyn Edison Company is a power in Brooklyn and New York politics, having been founded by the notorious Nicholas Brady of Tammany renown. Since the latter's death his place has been taken by Matthew S. Sloan, who has well been called the "uncrowned king of Brooklyn." Mr. Sloan is a member of the Prosser Committee for the relief of unemployment, is interested in a host of business and financial institutions in Brooklyn, as well as a number of clubs and philanthropic organizations, through which he poses as one of the leading public benefactors of the borough. Finally it must be noted that in view of the heavy advertising done by the company, in view of its financial and political influence, it is most difficult to secure any publicity for our campaign.

What should be done? Could we expect any help from the American Federation of Labor? Thus far there is no evidence of this organization doing anything substantial for men laid off by large corporations. On the contrary this organization has declared itself in opposition even to Unemployment Insurance. Furthermore it seems that as far as New York is concerned, Mr. Broach of the Electrical Workers' Union has managed to steer away from any conflicts with the power companies. The men employed by the power companies have been left helpless without any organization. Nothing could therefore be hoped for in this direction.

We therefore sought the help of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, which we hoped would approach the problem in a serious and organized manner. Thus far we must state that results have proven that our hopes were well founded.

C. P. L. A. Takes Action

The Conference for Progressive Labor Action, cooperating with the Organization Committee, began with a series of open air meetings in front of the pay office, on Wednesday afternoons, the day the men are paid off. Our efforts met the consistent and organized opposition of the police force, which showed itself by permitting company automobiles to block the corner, by driving away our audience, and

by threatening Louis F. Budenz with arrest. At these meetings the company spotters and officials, including the general foremen, turned out full force to spot those who dared to listen or take a leaflet, and to intimidate the others. The men were paid off with lightning speed in order to get them out of the vicinity.

We then organized two noon hour picket lines before the business offices of the Brooklyn Edison Company with banners like the following: "The Edison Co. Milks the Public and Fires Its

by the fact that Mr. Sloan, as a member of the Prosser Committee, had contributed over \$174,000 to the Unemployment Relief Fund in behalf of his associated companies, which money the men were forced to pay from their wages, just before over 1,600 were sent to the bread lines. These meetings helped us to break into the press.

Our next step was a petition campaign to the various unions, clubs, churches, civic organizations, etc., demanding a public investigation of the Brooklyn Edison Co. The petition

But our best weapon thus far is the *Live Wire*, our snappy little shop bulletin. This paper has grown from a mere leaflet into a real organ of the men. It has already won a standing among the Edison workers because of the valuable inside information it contains as to the activities and plans of the company. Instead of hesitating or refusing our literature as they did our first distribution, the men are now eager for the little blue paper, the *Live Wire*. Some of the men will defiantly ask for a paper, right in the



Organ of the Employees of the Brooklyn Edison Company. Send in your complaints, information and contributions to the Petition Committee of the Brooklyn Edison Company, Room 2004, 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City. All information, names, etc., will be kept strictly confidential.

DON'T BE AN OSTRICH!
The company is a big L. before a small story is told.
Our committee has received the following letters of support from Brooklyn organizations:
May 8, 1931
Enclosed you will find Petition that was sent to the above organization all signed up. The above organization wish you luck and success in all your undertakings.

ROUGH ON RATS
Foreman Miller, one of the chief drivers in the company, has been sent back with his tools, and also sent back with his tools, to go the way of King Alfonso. Here's hoping that we continue to make things better until we get rid of all the rats.

EDISON OFFICES PICKETED
May 7, the Brooklyn Edison Co. was picketed by prominent citizens give support.

At a meeting held on Tuesday, May 5, at the Church of the Savior, the Brooklyn Branch of the League for Independent Political Action passed a resolution of protest against the lay-off of over 1800 men by the Edison Co. and instructed its legal committee to investigate the possibilities of suing the company for the vacation money of which the employees laid-off, were robbed.

Facsimile of "The Live Wire," Fighting Organ of Brooklyn Edison Workers

Men;" "The Edison Lay-offs Are A Blot on Brooklyn;" "The Edison Co. Sends 1,600 Men to the Breadlines;" "We Demand a Public Investigation of the Brooklyn Edison Co.;" "We Demand Municipal Control of Public Utilities." The picket lines were followed up by two excellent open air meetings in front of the Brooklyn Borough Hall. We were astonished by the evidences of sympathy as a result of the picketing and the meetings. This company is cordially detested by the mass of consumers of electricity and gas, and the lay-offs certainly did not add to its popularity. Considerable sentiment was aroused by the fact that the company had laid men off just prior to the beginning of their vacation period, thus robbing them of fully \$50,000. Indignation was aroused also

campaign has met with a great deal of interest and response from many sources. As soon as a sufficient number of petitions are collected they will be presented to Mayor Walker for his consideration. In this connection it is to be noted that the Brooklyn Edison Company has for some reason or other received an UNLIMITED public franchise to furnish electric heat, light and power to over two million inhabitants of Brooklyn, that by its own statements the Consolidated Gas Company and its subsidiaries have found 1930 an unusually profitable year in spite of the depression, and that the Consolidated has recently applied for a revision of rates for itself and its subsidiaries. There should be considerable rich and interesting material forthcoming from a real investigation.

face of a foreman or a spotter. It is passed from hand to hand among the men and read studiously. The spotters are most anxious to get copies of this paper for the executives of the company. There is no question that the standing the *Live Wire* has obtained is due to the care with which it is gotten out, insuring complete reliability of the information contained, its serious approach, the absence of irrelevant issues, the fact that we stick closely to the issues which directly concern the men in the Edison Company, and its sharp slams at the company officials.

Making Headway

The results obtained thus far are very definite in spite of our meager resources. We have succeeded in setting up a functioning machinery for

information and organization among the employees of the various departments. We have aroused considerable public sentiment against the Brooklyn Edison Co., a public utility corporation. Conditions for the men have been considerably improved since our campaign began. The speed-up and slave-driving has been lessened for a time. One scheduled lay-off of 126 men in one bureau of the distribution department alone, was postponed and has not been put into effect yet. The temper of the men is evidenced by an occasional knockout of a slave-driving foreman. One or two of these slave-drivers have been reduced to the ranks as a result of the dissatisfaction among the men.

However, we are confronted with a number of serious problems which we must meet. Due to the system of spotters (increased as a result of our campaign), and to the general fear of lay-off, the men are intimidated to a marked degree. This fear must be broken down. Undoubtedly the next lay-off and the expected attempt at a drastic wage cut, will do much to break down this fear and passivity. Simultaneously the effort to secure public sympathy and support will have to be extended through public meetings, petitions, etc., linking it up with the demand for lower electric and gas rates, and public ownership of utilities. We have under consideration a suit for the \$50,000 vacation money rob-

bed from the men by the company. This is being planned in cooperation with the legal committee of the League for Independent Political Action, Brooklyn Branch, which has pledged its cooperation and support.

In my opinion the Brooklyn Edison campaign is particularly important for the labor movement, because it shows how the present unemployment problem can be effectively fought and linked up with a campaign for the organization of the unorganized. The results obtained thus far, indicate bigger achievements ahead if the public interest and support increases and if organized and systematic spade work is continued for the period of the next few months.

Demands Formulated by the Organization Committee of the Brooklyn Edison Co. Employees

1. Immediate reinstatement of all laid-off men with reimbursement of vacation money and the stopping of all further lay-offs.

2. In order to provide for the employment of additional men, the 40-hour 5-day week is to be established.

3. The recognition of a Grievance Committee freely elected by the men for the purpose of:

(a) Revising all complaints regarding speed-up and oppressive supervision by the company, these complaints to be taken up with representatives of the company for adjustment.

(b) The drawing up of a set of rules regarding working conditions, protection of health and safety, wages and hours, and supervision, together with representatives of the company.

(c) The review of all cases of men discharged for minor infractions of rules, with the purpose of reinstating all competent men.

4. Members of the Grievance Committee and those active in the Organization Committee shall be guaranteed against discrimination by the company.

5. The employment of special laborers for the digging of trenches, breaking through walls, etc., in subservice work. This

work is not to be done by wiremen, mechanics or helpers. There must be not less than two mechanics on each subservice job, or one mechanic and a helper.

6. Equal pay for equal work. All men who receive their tools and are sent out as mechanics should start off at 65 cents an hour. The company is to fulfill its pledge to raise the pay of mechanics every six months until the top rate is reached.

7. All pipe work, bending, cutting and threading to be done by two men. No wireman shall be forced to do this work alone.

8. The time required to do a job shall not be left to the whim of a foreman or general foreman, but shall be worked out by agreement between representatives of the company and the representatives of the men, including one man from each gang. Special extension of time shall be made where unusual difficulties exist.

9. All spotters and stool pigeons shall immediately be fired and the whole system of spying is to be abolished.

10. The system of special collections among the men and the practice of compulsory buying of company equipment (refrigerators, radios, etc.), shall be discontinued. There shall be no compulsory col-

lections of any kind or sales of company equipment through the officers of the company. Only such collections as authorized by the men shall be permitted, and such collections are to be made by representatives chosen by the men themselves.

11. The rule that men working on outside jobs (in the cable, subway and overhead bureaus) shall not be compelled to do such work in inclement weather, shall be strictly enforced.

12. There shall be a general readjustment upward of wages paid to office employees, the lowest wage for clerical help to be set at \$24.00 per week.

13. The practice of full day lay-offs for reasonable lateness shall be abolished.

Demands for other departments will be published in the near future.

Address all requests for information, assistance, complaints, etc., to the ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE OF THE BROOKLYN EDISON CO. EMPLOYEES, Room 2004, 104 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y., Phone TOMpkins Square 6-7123.

All communications will be treated as strictly confidential.

7,000 Strike in Allentown

By MARY KOKEN

ALLENTOWN is a city situated in the Lehigh Valley. It has an area of 15 square miles, and a population of about 100,000. It has 72 churches, 30 schools, 2 colleges, 2 preparatory schools and 358 factories. The slogan for Allentown is "Dwell Here and Prosper."

Allentown is predominantly a Pennsylvania Dutch city, but has also a large population of Italians, Hungarians, Slavs, Germans and Poles.

The factories in Allentown include silk, rayon, tractors, trucks, wire products, boots, shoes, lumber, wood and paper boxes, cigars, clothing, leather, furniture, hardware, cement, structural steel, etc. The largest among these is the silk industry, numbering 43 mills.

The Allentown Chamber of Commerce boasts of its cheap and contented labor. The hours of work are from 48 to 54 a week, and sometimes longer. Many of the silk mills that have a 48 hour week, work two-eight hour shifts; from 6 A. M. to 2 P. M. and from 2 P. M. to 10 P. M. A few mills work three 8-hour shifts. No lunch period is allowed in these mills.

Because of these conditions, many factories, especially silk, were brought into Allentown from other cities when they were pressed by organized labor. This situation has been going on for a number of years. The workers did not realize that they were taking the jobs from those who refused to work for such low wages.

About two years ago, the silk manufacturers, who had organized themselves into an association, saw fit to cut wages. One mill after another received a wage cut. When it was seen that the workers accepted it without any trouble, it was tried again. After the first two or three cuts, the workers showed their dissatisfaction. One mill after another went on strike at different times. There was no unity among the workers in general. Consequently the strikes were lost.

Wage cuts continued during these two years, until the wages were practically cut in half, and in some instances, more than half. The workers were not told of the reductions, and were not aware of them until they received their pay checks. When the checks were passed out to the workers by the foreman, the superintendent

stood in the background to watch the reaction of the workers. Naturally, everyone hesitated to express his opinion, for fear of losing his job.

Strenuous efforts have been made in the past two years by the U. T. W. to organize the silk workers. About seven months ago the first charter was granted. It included weavers, warpers, winders and loom fixers, numbering about 50 in all.

The Strike Starts

On April 22 of this year, the workers in one of the mills were told that they would receive a 16 per cent wage reduction. A number of weavers on the night shift were union members, and when they heard of the cut, they refused to go to work. They also helped to keep the rest of the night shift out. The next morning the whole night shift turned out before six o'clock, to keep the day shift out. The firm then sent its orders to another mill to have filled. The workers in that mill learned of it and refused to fill a scab order. Within a few days the news spread, and by the end of the week there were 28 mills on strike. A few mills closed down in order to prevent a strike, but in a few days opened again. Immediately the strikers surrounded the mills, hundreds of strikers picketing each mill. Those who were working became frightened, and joined the strikers. Most of the mills are out 100 per cent. A few mills still open their doors each morning for those who want to work, and a very small number of workers go in. Those who do are often taken home by the strikers. The number working is getting smaller each day.

There are now 43 mills on strike, affecting between six and seven thousand workers. A large number of the workers are Italians, Slavs, Germans and Pennsylvania Dutch. This is the largest silk strike in the history of Allentown.

Every day an investigation committee visits each mill to find out whether there is anyone working, and if there is, how many. The following morning the pickets, who meet at the strike headquarters every morning at 5:30, are told where to go on duty. This mass picketing has been very effective.

The strike thus far has been a peaceful one. The pickets are warned against violence. Three arrests have been made for throwing stones in the mills, but upon investigation it was found that the stones were thrown by outsiders.

There are at present between three and four thousand workers signed up with the union.

Committees Function

The committees that are functioning are: relief, finance, investigation, soliciting and picketing.

Shop meetings are held every day. In some instances every other day. Seventeen halls have been opened to the strikers for their meetings. A mass meeting is held every evening at headquarters. All these meetings are very well attended.

Speakers from various organizations have been heard at the mass meetings. Several informal talks have been given by one of the local school teachers, who has shown interest in the strike from the beginning. These talks deal with industrial problems, and the faults in our economic system. Much of this is new to the mass of the workers, but they listen with a great deal of interest. Strike songs are sung with enthusiasm. There is a splendid spirit among the workers, a determination to hold out until the strike is won.

Funds for relief are being raised in various ways. Strike ribbons are sold, both to strikers and sympathizers. A minstrel was given and a collection taken. Plans are under way for a benefit dance to be held June 3. A number of business men have given relief in the form of money and food. An average of 75 families per day receive relief. A noon meal is served at headquarters for those pickets who ordinarily buy their meals out, but whose funds have been used up. There are about 150 meals served daily.

The union agreement is, an eight-hour day, a uniform wage-scale, and the recognition of the union. Two mills have already accepted the agreement, and the workers have gone back to work. Another mill is expected to sign up shortly.

The workers are determined to win. They are ready to face anything in an effort to win the battle.

Flashes from the Labor World

Brightest spot in the labor world is the tiny flash of hope that American workers have tired of going hungry and are ready to fight for the food which lies around them in such an embarrassing surplus. As might be expected, the most aggressive fighting is appearing in the coal fields. Kentucky miners, equally tired of hunger and gunmen, fought it out with deputized thugs in Harlan County so effectively that several gunmen were killed and militia was brought in to back them up.

With the naive hopefulness that seems always with us, the miners met the troops with a hearty welcome, certain that they would disarm the guards, protect legal union meetings and give impartial enforcement of the law. Members of the same United Mine Workers of America met the Colorado militia in the same way in 1914, gave them their first meal in camp, invited them to the miners' dances, celebrated their coming to disarm the guards and bring peace. The Ludlow massacre which followed seems to have been no lesson to Kentucky. However, their lesson came soon enough. The guards were not disarmed, the colonel commanding quickly showed his determination to help the operators, U. M. W. A. officials and Evarts town officials friendly to the miners were jailed by the troops and a good start made toward another frame-up on murder charges. Events are happening too rapidly to make comment on Kentucky valid after it's a day old. A Federated Press correspondent reports that the "hardware" business was better in eight weeks than it had been in all Harlan's history. That may be comment enough.

The other hopeful spot is West Virginia, of course. The campaign for organization there is well known to LABOR AGE readers; developments now are surely to be watched with the most eager interest.

* * *

The frame-up has not lost its place in the American labor struggle. Witness Harlan with its murder charges; the Hoffmann conspiracy conviction; the five Paterson silk workers held on a murder charge after the boss was slugged by thugs who the workers thought were to attack them; the Scottsboro case, where nine Negro boys may be electrocuted on an obvious frame-up of an attack on white girls.

The new factor is that labor is getting some idea of the meaning of the frame-up system and is organizing better to meet it. In not one of the cases named

will the bosses get by without a fight, unless it be at Harlan where the Lewis machine may let anything happen.

* * *

Its much too late to suggest it now, but there ought to have been a World Conference on Hunger called for London May 18. There are two great problems facing the capitalist world—what shall we do with millions who are hungry, of whom eight millions have starved during the last three years and nearly two millions more are marked for death by starvation during the next year? And, what shall we do with our surplus food?

As to the latter, there have been several conferences including one at London beginning May 18 and will probably be more. A capitalistic solution so that consumers shall get cheaper wheat and producers shall get more for their wheat while middlemen make even larger profits is not really a simple matter as a bit of arithmetic will show.

The inexpert layman might figure it out this way: There is and has been for several years a continuing famine in China. It is officially reported that the toll will be nine or ten millions who will finally have died from starvation. Those millions, according to American engineers, could have built a great irrigation and drainage system which would have prevented future floods and famines if they could have had, as a wage the food necessary to keep them alive. The country then could have become productive. We loaned billions, most of which we will never get back, to help Europeans slay each other. It would seem to an inexpert layman that a little loan of \$250,000,000 with which China could buy our Farm Board's surplus wheat at \$1 a bushel, might be good business. Chinese are unused to wheat bread as food, we are told, but some way we have faith in the ability of American selling methods to sell starving folks on most any kind of food. An inexpert layman sees several advantages—world goodwill relieving war tension, hiring of jobless seamen and use of empty ships, more nearly normal price for world wheat crop, education of millions of future wheat customers.

So an inexpert and idealistic layman might think. Not so the practical men at London. A recent dispatch from London to the New York Times in regard to the wheat conference said this:

"Here and there some idealistic but inexpert layman bobs up with the approval of Senator Borah's notion that if

there is too much wheat in one part of the world and starving people in another, part of the grain should be taken to those who are hungry. It is further suggested that with hundreds of millions of unwanted bushels of wheat stored in Canada and the United States, with millions of unemployed men in both countries, with all the bays and harbors of the Pacific Coast crowded with idle ships and with intermittent famines in Asia there might be a big job of transportation across the Pacific Ocean which would give employment to at least some of the idle ships and men, empty the American granaries and fill Asiatic bellies, all by one transaction. That will not be considered seriously by the London grain conference."

* * *

Are the college boys and the preachers going to take labor's rightful task in fighting war? The question arises as result of the preacher vote against war announced by the *World Tomorrow* recently and the successful fight made by college boys against compulsory military training in two schools.

The result will be that the preachers and the college boys will weaken as the war mongers know, whereas a labor movement threatening to stop every wheel on declaration of war—with the overthrow of the bosses looming in the background—would put a really effective brake on war.

* * *

There was a good joke going the rounds of LaSalle Street—Chicago's Wall Street—last summer. A broker's clerk reported to his chief that some sap had looked up U. S. Steel, found that its par was 100, and entered an order for 100 shares at \$100. It was selling around \$160 at the time. The broker was supposed to have shrugged his shoulders and said, "Enter the order," at which point all laughed. If the story were true, the order was filled May 18.

Nothing could indicate better the honest opinion of the stock gamblers on future business. Headlines about prosperity are for the jobless. The men who bet fortunes they are right, are guessing that prospects are only two-thirds as good as they were a year ago, about one-third as good as they were two years ago. Prospects for stock gamblers weren't so good two years ago, either.

* * *

"This is the finest depression we ever had." That is no inexpert judgment. That's the careful statement of Henry

Ford; he called it a careful statement himself.

Here we take it are some of the good points:

Income for wage-earners has been reduced 10 billion dollars.

Many people of low physical resistance who might have become charity cases have starved to death, thus making a substantial savings in the future cost of government.

Thousands of banks have crashed, thus "strengthening" what is left of the financial structure.

Other thousands of businesses have broken, weakening competition.

Incipient hopes for higher wages and shorter hours have been crushed in millions of breasts.

We are in the midst of a great struggle over wages but the story of the struggle will never be told. Flashes of fight in coal, steel, textiles, hosiery and other industries may make the labor paper headlines but they will simply be tiny outcroppings of the real struggle. Nor do the official figures mean anything. The real wage-slashing is going on secretly. Thousands of union men are working below the scale, "temporarily." More thousands of workers, petty executives, technical workers, and others are "buying stock in the company."

Perhaps one should not call it a struggle since there seems to be so little opposition to the cuts. Yet the heroic facing of bitter alternatives in millions of homes would make an epic if it could be known and told. What flame can be found to fuse that heroism into a force to face the boss unitedly?

Two blows have been struck recently at the silly laws that hedge the activities of the workers. Judge Wanamaker, at Akron, released Paul Kassay, who had been arrested with great publicity on the charge that he had said that he had spit on the airship Akron and it would therefore crash the first time it was flown. Talk isn't a crime in Ohio, the judge thought. Perhaps he was impressed by the fact that the highest executives of the company building the ship said at once that a workman couldn't possibly harm the dirigible that way because of the inspection—a fact which a worker would obviously know.

Then Chief Justice Charles E. Hughes of the U. S. Supreme Court upheld the right to oppose organized government in releasing Yetta Stromberg, the girl who faced a long sentence in prison for flying a small red flag over a children's camp. This is a first blow at the California anti-

labor laws. Another effective one is rumored in the offing. There is still a chance of getting Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings out of their cells.

Two reports were put out by Hoover administration officials within a few days. One says that the bosses have kept their pledge to Hoover to keep up wages. The other says that wages as low as \$3



Washington News

The Wrong Way to Go About It

a week for adults for full time in textile mills have been found in Massachusetts, and that from \$5 to \$7 a week is common.

The combination of pay cuts and short time is driving millions of American workers slowly into a condition of poverty that is carefully hidden by our newspapers and officials and that is scarcely known by other millions of workers. Coal miners have been specially hard hit. There seem to be more ways of cutting a miner's wage than almost any other. As the U. M. W. A. has discontinued these ways have all been used. Reports come in from all parts of the coal industry of the workers slowly sinking below the subsistence level, with sickness and death taking their toll as the standard of living sags. For the most part, these miners live in isolated villages where they do not see the luxury in which their bosses live nor do charitably-inclined folk see their misery. They just sink lower and lower in their strength and health as the days pass.

Much the same thing is reported from textile districts. Towns are broke and cannot help if they would. All seem to suffer together as they wait for the mills

to open or for them to increase the days worked per week. This is true not only where wages are \$1 a day and less but where they would be twice that if the mills were open. It is the same story as that of the coal fields, low wage rates plus part time work means intense suffering. Reports from New England and the South compete in tales of destitution.

In New York official reports show that average income for workers is down a half. Industrial Commissioner Frances Perkins reports an unusually large number of illegal instances of overtime for minors and women—while others walk the street hungry. Suicides in 1930 broke all records for New York State. On Mothers Day it was announced that deaths in childbirth had broken all records in the first quarter of 1931!

In one Arkansas county, 20,000 of 21,000 were kept alive only by Red Cross food doles; 700,000 were being fed in February in the nation. A newspaper editor in Macon, Ga., estimates that the average annual income of families within a 50-mile radius of Macon is from \$80 to \$150. Not monthly, yearly!

LABOR AGE could be filled with reports like that. It could then be shown that Detroit has gone broke with its charity toll of \$2,000,000-a-month and is cutting the hungry from the rolls; Philadelphia has recently dropped families representing 150,000 people from public or private charity; in Chicago 60 per cent of the taxes were not paid in 1930 so that charity must stop and city employees—including the Red Squad cops—must go unpaid; that other cities than Fall River must soon go into bankruptcy as thousands of school districts have already done.

Nor is there the slightest indication of betterment. In two great industrial states, New York and Illinois, total wage income decreases between March and April for factory workers was just the same—2.7 per cent. The *New York Times* business index showed a slight, seasonal upturn in March, is now headed precipitately downward again. Millionaires are talking philosophically of three to five years more of the depression. Andrew Mellon, greatest secretary of the treasury since McAdoo, says that he has no idea when or how we shall come out of it. The newly elected president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, Silas H. Strawn, head of Montgomery Ward, banker, lawyer, typical "new era" capitalist, says no business leader has a program, "and the worst of it is that the nations will not boycott Russia while they need business so badly."

FRANK L. PALMER.

The Fight Grows Hotter

WALL STREET was shaken up a bit on the eve of May Day. The picket committee of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action displayed banners on the wage cut issue before the holy of the holies, the offices of J. P. Morgan & Co. The banners protested vigorously against the wage-cutting program which the banking interests have inaugurated.

Set on by their bosses, and granted extra time for the "entertainment," Wall Street clerks proceeded to break up the meeting before the Morgan concern, which followed the picketing. After repeated rushes, which were indifferently halted by the police, the platform on which the C.P.L.A. speakers were addressing the 5,000 who had gathered was broken beyond repair.

The account in the ultra-conservative *New York Evening Post* of April 30 reads:

MAY DAY VANGUARD BOOED ON WALL STREET

Crowds Mill About Band of 36—Are Dispersed by Police

A noonday Wall Street crowd, augmented by several thousand persons from all over the financial district, had a field day during the lunch hour today when it booed, jeered and jostled a small band of thirty-six persons bearing Communist banners denouncing big business which attempted to stage a meeting on Broad Street opposite J. P. Morgan & Co. at the entrance of the New York Stock Exchange.

Extra details of police called out to keep the crowd in order were pushed by office clerks and runners, who surged round the little band of agitators and drowned out their Communistic utterances with loud catcalls. When the crowd had swelled to about 5,000 and every inch of space was filled by amused spectators, police disbanded the meeting and gradually forced the crowd to go about its business.

On two occasions the crowd became unruly and pushed forward en masse toward the small speakers' platform erected by the group, knocking down the speakers and threatening to injure several persons. Police finally pushed

C. P. L. A. Aids Mansfield Steel Strikers . . . Brooklyn Edison Battle Makes Definite Headway . . . The Attack in Wall Street . . . Muste-Foster Debate Attracts Thousands . .

them back and restored order while bits of paper, soap and other office waste basket remains were dumped from office windows on the crowd

March on Morgan's

Just after 12:30 o'clock the group of would-be speakers, representatives of the Conference for Progressive Labor Ac-

TO THE UNION!



Putney, W. Va., Miners' Folk Coming up to meeting

tion, appeared on Wall Street marching down from the East River. As they approached J. P. Morgan & Co.'s office, at the foot of the Sub-Treasury Building, police ran forward and ordered them to lower their banners. Several members of the group refused to do so and a few mild scuffles ensued, while police pushed them over to the other side of Broad Street.

Here they raised a speakers' platform and, swinging banners declaiming that

"Morgan Will Follow Alfonso," and "Wage Cutting Must Stop," started to harangue the crowd, which was composed largely of office boys and clerks. The first speaker, Louis F. Budenz, editor of *Labor Age*, had but barely yelled that "Hoover was a celestial engineer sent down from heaven—the most bankrupt and cheapest President since Rutherford Hayes," when the office boys started yelling in unison, gleefully drowning out the speaker's words every time he opened his mouth.

Police, under Sergeant Kennedy of the Old Slip station, attempted to bring about some sort of order, but were unsuccessful and the crowd grew in volume, packing the steps of the Sub-Treasury Building, lining the sidewalks and filling Broad Street in front of the speaker's stand. Many others peered from the windows.

Crowd Increases

A. J. Muste, a member of the group and said to be dean of Brookwood College, then arose and demanded that he be given a hearing. The crowd grew more and more raucous and a riveting machine started hammering to add to the turmoil. A piece of soap fell from above and struck a patrolman on the head, but he only glared and took no action. The crowd then surged forward and rushed the platform, pushing over Mr. Muste and tearing down several banners. Police formed a wide circle round the speakers and announced to Mr. Muste that his committee would have to go.

After much argument, in which the crowd joined enthusiastically, deriding the speakers and urging police to "lock 'em up," Mr. Muste, whose hat had been lost in the scuffle, conceded that the meeting had been a failure and told his followers to lower the few banners which had not been snatched away by the crowd.

Police gradually dispersed the crowd, many of whom had gone without

lunch, and by 1:30 order once more reigned.

Link to Reds Denied

Mr. Budenz, speaking after the meeting to reporters, denied that the Conference for Progressive Labor Action was a Communist organization and declared that it was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. The purpose of the meeting, he said, had been to protest against the wage cuts proposed by prominent bankers, and it was felt that no better place to protest could be found than in the center of the banking district.

Witnesses stated that the concrete mixer was started up by orders of policeman 3173. The C.P.L.A. intends to return to Wall and Broad Streets soon, to conduct another meet-

agement, as well as stimulating hope among those who were so brazenly laid off.

In the *New York Times* of May 21, the following account of the second mass meeting appears:

COMPANY LAY-OFFS SCORED Mass-Meeting Speakers Accuse Brooklyn Edison of Unfairness

Speakers at a mass meeting at the Brooklyn Borough Hall yesterday accused the Brooklyn Edison Company of laying off men unnecessarily, intimidating workers by threatening lay-offs, depriving workers of holidays by dispensing with their services just before the holidays fell due, and of bringing pressure to bear on employes to induce them to buy refrigerators sold by the company.

of the results of the C.P.L.A. campaign to date. Organizations in the borough have been aroused at the anti-social policy of the monopoly and have passed resolutions of protest, as a result of our letters to them on the subject. The Brooklyn branch of the L.I.P.A. has denounced the company and has decided to cooperate actively in the fight against its present program. In the meantime, meetings continue to be held in front of the pay offices of the company on Wednesday, when the men come for their pay.

Helpful Work in Mansfield

The spontaneous strike of 1,600 workers of the Empire Steel Company of Mansfield, Ohio, called also for the cooperative service of the C. P. L. A.



Federated Pictures

Meeting of Conference for Progressive Labor Action before J. P. Morgan & Co. against wage cuts. Stock Exchange in background

ing. There were thousands who wanted to hear the addresses, even in that heart of Fascist America. The story of anti-wage-cut demonstration went out on the A. P. wires and let the workers know that there were some folks ready to carry the fight to the front door of the Master of America.

The call for help of the Brooklyn Edison Co. employees has also been answered. The general offices of that company have been picketed on two occasions and two large mass meetings have been held at Brooklyn Borough Hall by the C.P.L.A. An organ of the workers has been issued, "The Live Wire," which has given the men inside the company hope and encour-

aged by about 1,000, the meeting was held under the auspices of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. Louis F. Budenz, executive secretary of the Conference, said a petition was being prepared for presentation to Mayor Walker and the Public Service Commission, asking that the corporation be investigated.

Officials of the company said employes who had been laid off were hired a year ago for the Summer work and that they had been retained last Fall because unemployment conditions had become worse.

The article in this issue, from a former employee of the corporation, gives the story of what the Brooklyn Edison has done to its men and some

As soon as the strike broke out, our representative was at the scene. He attended all the strike meetings and was able to give to the men who had walked out cooperative counsel and advice. A close friendly relationship has been established there, and our contacts with the Mansfield workers are continuing.

The Mansfield strike was significant in that the men, who had been unorganized, won back the 5 per cent wage cut just imposed and also the 10 per cent wage cut introduced some time back. They also set up local organization.

The *Daily Worker* seems to be deceiving itself in reporting on its front page that the strikers refused to join

the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers through local activity of the T. U. U. L. No Communist was visible in Mansfield, so far as the strikers were concerned, according to our representative. An official organizer of the Amalgamated approached the strikers, suggesting their entry into that union. The men decided against such affiliation, without any pressure from the outside of any kind.

Our activities in the steel regions are going forward with renewed energy. The first edition of the *Mahanoy Valley Steel Worker* has appeared in Easton Ohio. Obviously, much of this work has to be carried on severely under cover, by reason of the extensive espionage system of the steel companies. We commend heartily the good work of our boys in steel.

Activity in West Virginia

From Ohio's steel districts to the mines of West Virginia is not a far distance, "as the crow flies." Frank Keeney and his associates continue valiantly to hammer out their union, in the face of hunger and company oppression. That story is told in detail on another page of this issue. This may be emphasized and added: That the C. P. L. A. is going ahead in every possible way in its aid to the effort in the Kanawha Valley.

Tom Tippet is on the job. Cal Bellaver and Kitty Pollak are doing their good work in organizing the relief work out in the field in Kanawha. When Mothers' Day rolled around, a friend of the People's Lobby and of other organizations furnished the means whereby mothers and children from various sections of the country could go to Washington and demand a special session of Congress from Hoover. The C. P. L. A. office was assigned the job of getting the mothers and children to Washington. West Virginia was represented there by two mothers and a child, and one of the West Virginia mothers suggested that President Hoover give up one of his week-ends on the Rapidan and go down to the mining country.

On May 15th a meeting was held in New York City, for the purpose of seeing if intensive work could not be done among the workers in the way of West Virginia relief. This is to

be supplementary to the splendid work being carried on by the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief. It was agreed that a number of steps should be taken, after the consent of the Emergency Committee was secured, in order that there would be no duplication of relief efforts. Among these steps were: The decision to circulate an appeal list among union groups, shop committees, and in other ways, by which small amounts per person could be secured; the stimulation of community money-raising through

of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action and those of the Trade Union Unity League was clearly brought out.

Muste's quotations from Lenin, which directly contradicted the T. U. U. L. policy, were particularly effective and went home. To them Foster could merely state that "the best Leninists in Moscow" put another interpretation on the clear-cut statements of Lenin on correct radical trade union policy. This sort of a theological ring to the Communist argument for

a suicidal policy was evident in Foster's "argument" throughout the afternoon. It was impossible for him, however, to explain away the complete collapse of the Communist-controlled unions, which Muste brought out in quotations from organs of the Communist party itself—*The Communist* and *Labor Unity*. It was also impossible for him to offset the criticism of the tactics used by the Needle Trades Industrial Union, which has become a weak imitation of the A. F. of L. in its bargaining methods. Foster could only confine himself to a blanket denunciation of the C. P. L. A. as "Social Fascist" in character, linking us up for some unknown reason with Adler and others of that type. The debate stimulated thinking and discussion, which will extend further as the C. P. L. A. activities among the workers expand.

The week before the Muste-Foster debate, Louis F. Budenz and Albert Weisbord, former leader of the Pas-saic strike, debated the C. P. L. A. vs. Communist tactics at the 14th Street Labor Temple. This led to an invitation by the Labor Temple Forum for further discussion of the C. P. L. A. by Budenz on May 14. J. B. S. Hardman has also been active in stating the C. P. L. A. position before various groups, and the organization has been called upon to furnish speakers to a number of unions and other organizations on the unemployment issue.



Cartoon from *The Live Wire*, organ of the Brooklyn Edison employees, depicting demotion of speed-up foreman. Drawn by Henkelman.

small affairs or collections in worker towns and neighborhoods; direct appeals to unions on the West Virginia situation. A Labor Committee for West Virginia Miners' Relief was created by the New York branch to drive forward these plans. Justus Ebert is treasurer of the committee, and we hope that there will be a generous response among our friends and members in the way of personal participation in the raising of money for the miners.

Debates and Discussions

One of the outstanding events of the past month was the Muste-Foster debate at the New Star Casino in New York, under the auspices of the John Reed Club. Three thousand persons attended the debate, and 2,000 others were turned away. The line of cleavage between the tactics and policies

The Depression Hits the Southwest

By ISRAEL MUFSON

WITH the exception of the flop-houses and the bread-lines in the larger cities, extensive poverty resulting from the present depression is still pretty well kept from public view. Whether workers without jobs stay away from the more central and popular thoroughfares, or whether the clothes from "prosperity" days are still sufficiently wearable to present the customary "pressed" front, there is still very little surface evidence of the result of America's greatest deflation. Main Street still surges with silk-stockinged damsels and knife-edge trousered gentlemen to continue the illusion of wealth widely distributed and the good life within reach of all who are worthy.

It is true that the older and denser cities of the East show more of the strain of the workers' shortening earning-power than do those West of the Mississippi. It is more difficult to keep the larger number of unemployed in the industrial East, from overflowing in the squares of the affluent. There, shoddy clothes rub elbows with silk. Such evidences of poverty, however, are too few to cause undue alarm. The world is still very definitely a safe world for investment—on the surface.

Beneath the surface, things are neither so peaceful nor so beautiful. A question indifferently asked invariably supplies the answer.

"This is a dead town," was the opinion of the handsome, soft-spoken youth, who brought me my eggs one morning in Tulsa, Okla. "There is nothing for anyone to do here. I'm stuck because I can't keep a job long enough to get a stake with which to get out of here."

One must know Tulsa to appreciate the youth's estimation of its present virility. Tulsa is a boom town, prospering with the opening of the Oklahoma oil fields. Long before one reaches the city the beacon lights of its skyscrapers, modest enough, when compared with the sky ticklers of New York City, but symbols of achievement in their own rights, point their revolving fingers into the darkness of the surrounding prairie. Coming north from the black loam of Arkansas, the gleaming brilliance of Tulsa's towers kindle a glow in the heart of the dusk-weary traveller. At last a color other than black! At last a smell other than

of the earth! And the day does not dissipate any of Tulsa's charms. Probably one of the finest architectural creations in the States is represented by the modernistic Episcopal church. Another church raises its spire to heaven in serious competition with the Rockefeller Riverside church in New York. Fourteen to twenty story hotels assure the stranger of ample accommodations. And all this in a city of around 50,000 population!

Loudly the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce demands that Tulsa be made a seaport. But how make a seaport out of a town which squats in the center of a dust-parched prairie is a problem that seems to hold no serious obstacle to Tulsa's boosters. Of course the Great Lakes could be pulled down from the North or the Gulf of Mexico could be pulled up from the South. Small matter, the Chamber of Commerce will undoubtedly find a way to bring deep water to Tulsa, but how will it bring employment?

Denver, Colorado, is much less ambitious. It has no dreams of ships from the earth's corners anchoring in its inland harbors some day. It is satisfied to have the Rockies for its biggest industry. Removed from Nature's tremendous upheaval, Denver would probably suffer the fate of Goldsmith's Deserted Village. Even so, Denver has its own unemployment problem and its own remedy. All unemployed workers are admonished to go forth onto the lawns of the community and free the beautiful collective greensward from the pesky dandelion. The Denver remedy for unemployment is not without its merits. Picking dandelions is not only a job, but dandelions offer eat and drink in and of themselves to those who know the proper recipes.

Land Toilers

Once out of the city the economic solvency of America's producers is far more difficult to ascertain. Of course, the land toiler of Arkansas and even of Oklahoma neither can nor cares to

bide his poverty. The Russian humblest peasant hut can stand favorable comparison with the unpainted, tumble-down seamy shacks called home by the majority of the landed gentry of these benighted states. The soil fills every crease and pore of the native populace until it seems that man, woman, horse, house and child are but different patterns sprung direct from Mother Earth's womb. The men appear darker than nature colored them in their eight-day beards. The women are slutty and brown-stained from excessive indulgence in snuff. Another season awaits them without additional hope. The market for their staple produce, cotton, promises to be flooded with greater world productivity, prices naturally falling to lowest levels yet reached.

Further North in the more prosperous sections of our agricultural domain, the relative well-being of those who live by the soil is more difficult to estimate. Ploughed and furrowed fields look just as neat and hopeful whether wheat sells for \$1.50 or 40 cents a bushel. The general appearance of the farm holdings along the highways is far more tempting and "substantial." Farmers' homesteads are more solid, less earthy than among the farmers of Arkansas and Oklahoma. But whether these visual evidences are due to higher standards or to the rigidity of Kansas and Colorado winters is difficult to surmise without more thorough investigation. If the natives of Kansas and Colorado attempted to live like those in Arkansas and Oklahoma they'd freeze to death. Probably in all states most tillers of the soil live too close to the subsistence level for comfort. However, farmers are always optimistic and this year the cotton as well as the wheat crop will be bigger than ever before.

Roving Workers

Hard times, unemployment, savings wiped out and most physical roots uprooted—what do they all mean toward

(Continued on page 29)

In Other Lands

RUSSIA

The Soviet easily won first place in the headlines of our press and secured the greatest amount of attention in the international publicity contest. In the great game to manoeuvre for the best position in the world's spotlight Russia's statesmen are masters of the new diplomacy and the fine and subtle art of stealing the other fellow's thunder and his political clothes. Litvinoff and his associates have demonstrated that they and the Soviet colleagues have lost none of the cunning for which the old Czaristic diplomats were famous and rightly feared by other national contenders in council craft. Being first of all realists without apology the Soviet men observed the economic chaos and its political reflex in European international affairs. Russia went to the London Wheat Congress and stole the entire picture from the Americans, British, Germans, South Americans and Australians the great wheat producing and consuming peoples. Litvinoff proposed a sort of truce, that capitalist nations admit the Soviet is here to stay and to enjoy its own economic system. His proposal is called "a pact." When it came to limiting its production of wheat Litvinoff demanded pre-war acreage for Russia which was a hard slam at the industrial countries whose statesmen have been trying to regulate and thereby undermine the sovereignty of Russia and other countries. Litvinoff confounded and confused the diplomats. Other news from the Soviet is that all are employed but that prices are high when compared with those prevailing in other lands. Peace reigns within the Communist Party and many of the revolting leaders have returned to the fold and made their peace with Stalin. The Five Year Plan will not succeed according to Western standards of efficiency but judged by old Russian standards and achievements it is said to be a success. Its economic campaign has struck terror into the hearts of the capitalist nations and made it more feared in one season than ten years of Comintern activity. It has also secured the leadership of the Balkan and Slav States in the wheat discussions. Russia is back in her old stride.

SPAIN

The Don's Revolution is not the rose-water affair some journalists thought it would be. Anti-clericalism, ever a prominent phase of bourgeois struggles against the old order, has broken out in

several cities. The match that exploded the powder barrel was a pastoral letter from a Madrid Cardinal to the priests and people of his diocese. In it he advocated the support of the Monarchal party at the coming national elections. This led to the burning of many Catholic schools, monasteries and churches but strange to say to no loss of life. The latter has led shrewd observers to state that the Monarchy or Tory agitators were involved with other Extremists in some of the destruction. It is not likely that angry revolutionists would be so chivalrous or timid as to let nuns and monks walk out of the buildings unmolested. Some Republican leaders said the Tories were largely responsible for the rioting and church burning as an electioneering trick so as to discredit the government party in the country districts where the Republican movement is not strong. The Provisional Government stood firm and proclaimed martial law in the cities affected. It is now lifted and internal peace reigns everywhere. One sign that the Republican cabinet is sincere is the granting of the oil monopoly to Russia and the ousting of the American oil kings. Of course the Dons will secure trade concessions that will eventually aid both nations. The Pope has protested against the church burnings though he has not condemned the Cardinal who started the mischief. Like the Encyclical on labor and his admonition to employers to pay living wages to workers little serious attention will be paid to it. Charles Schwab, a Catholic, who controls the Bethlehem Steel plants, cut wages a few days after, thereby telling the world that industrial and economic questions are not the business of the Papacy. The cabinet followed it with a decree abolishing the State Church and putting all creeds on the same footing. It served notice on the British and foreign companies exploiting Spanish workers at low wages that there must be a re-orientation upwards. As a lesson to all the world and to the delegates to the International Federation of Trade Unions held in Madrid on the first week of May Spain endorsed the Washington Eight Hour proposals and all the fine things that were agreed to at the Washington Conference right after the war, but which were more honored in the breach than in the observance by the British, Jap and other governments. British labor leaders, A. J. Cook and W. M. Citrine, who were in Madrid for May Day said the general strike was the most successful piece of work they had ever

seen. They also stated that the Monarchy can not come back.

GREAT BRITAIN

Although the Labor Government continues in office with Ramsay MacDonald leading wages continue to be slashed right and left all over the Three Kingdoms. Even the farm laborers, lowest paid of all, are cut about five per cent in their wages. Shipbuilders are angling for another conference with the workers and a cut. All in all labor standards were greatly reduced and MacDonald was helpless to avert the downward march. The Socialists or I. L. P. group within the Labor Party are all prosecuting a vigorous campaign of organization and criticism. They have several times drawn MacDonald's fire. Snowden has read them out of his list of callers and is getting more and more friendly with Lloyd George and the Liberals. His budget was a Liberal one and except for the dole sections not remotely labor. The reactionary Ulster subsidy was continued despite promises to the contrary. The high military and naval commitments were maintained although the demand for reductions is the greatest in the history of the country. The Liberal economic program rather than the Labor one was put through. The much lauded land tax will take two years more before the machinery for enforcing it is ready. Then the Tories may be in office and if so will undoubtedly repeal it. The land tax may give MacDonald a popular war cry and an "issue" which he and all parties have been looking for. Three special elections were fought and with three different results. One was lost through the intervention of the Mosleyites who polled enough of votes to throw the seat to the enemy. The second was a barren and meaningless victory over the Communists who polled 5,000 votes in a perfectly safe Welsh constituency. The third was retained by the Labor Party but with a reduced plurality. Britain's foreign politics continues to be managed with ability and success, the contrary of its home affairs.

AUSTRIA

This little state is gaining more attention than those ten times its size. First Austria and Germany decide on economic unity. This caused uproar in Paris and London and all kinds of threats. Now France offers Austria a loan if it will abandon unity with the Reich. Soon Vienna will be the spoiled child instead of the ragged urchin of Europe.

PATRICK L. QUINLAN.



"Say It With Books"



WHITHER SOCIALISM?

America's Way Out, by Norman Thomas.
The Macmillan Co. \$2.50.

IN "America's Way Out" Norman Thomas has attempted to formulate a "comprehensive restatement of the socialist case in the light of post-war history, especially for Americans." This work is important not only because of its broad scope but also because of the recognized position of leadership which Thomas has achieved in the Socialist Party. Here is a fresh, vigorous statement of the socialist position. What is its strength and what its weakness?

The title of the work well indicates the author's approach to his subject. He thinks of America as "America" rather than as a population divided into warring social classes. His discussion is addressed to the public, to the open-minded student of social problems rather than to the working-class. In this respect his treatment of the subject is similar to that of the pre-Marxian school of Utopian socialists. It is primarily an appeal to the reason—the reason of all, regardless of their class position in society.

The greatest strength of the Utopian socialists was manifested in their criticism of capitalism. Thomas likewise does an excellent job in showing up the planlessness, waste, misery, cruelty and injustice inherent in the prevailing social order. He draws on current American life for abundant concrete material to support his criticism. Moreover, he talks in plain "United States" which anybody can understand. Following his criticism of machine civilization Thomas sets forth his philosophy of socialism.

Marxism, in his opinion, is out of date. It doesn't fit in well with the spirit and findings of modern science. Perhaps it would be best to quote his own words on this point since he departs entirely from the orthodox socialist position:

"Not only is the concept of economic determinism inadequate to the weight Marxists often put on it but so is the more vehemently held dogma of the class conflict.

"The record of war and post-war years

has shown that the old debate between Marxists and non-Marxists or revisionists has little meaning or significance.

"Before the times are ripe for a social philosophy as congenial to them as was Marxism to the latter half of the nineteenth century we must again come far nearer to a 'synthesis of knowledge and aspiration' than this troubled post war epoch affords."

Thus it is evident that while Thomas rejects Marxism he has no adequate philosophy to offer in its place. In fact it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Thomas has no socialist philosophy at all, for in indicating the manner in which his socialist philosophy is to be formulated he says, "The cornerstone of that philosophy is the absolute necessity of planned control of the resources and machinery of the world in the common interest if we are to avoid disaster." This is not philosophy but a program. It is a very good program as far as it goes, but it is no guide to the interpretation of history, nor does it help us to unravel and understand the complex social forces and conditions with which we must reckon.

Curiously enough, while Thomas declares that the debate between Marxists and revisionists has little meaning or significance, most of his criticism of Marx is simply a rehash of the old revisionist arguments. He tells us that Marx and Engels "could not have been expected to forecast the nature of modern war and its deadliness or the development of machinery which has gone beyond the speculation of any nineteenth-century thinker in its capacity for production."

If Thomas will reread the first section of the Communist Manifesto and chapter thirteen of volume one of Marx's Capital he will find a marvelous prediction of the very development which "Marx and Engels could not have been expected to forecast." I cite this instance not to imply that I am one of those who believe that Marx and Engels said the last word in the field of social science, but to indicate that many of their critics overlook and minimize the tremendous contributions they did make. It is well to avoid dogmatism and hair-splitting arguments,

and it is especially important to point out wherein Marxian analysis and prediction have not tallied with the facts, but the core of socialist science is still Marxian, and it unquestionably provides the best guide to socialist action and organization.

One cannot escape the impression that the chief weakness of Thomas's book lies precisely in this fact that it nowhere contains a Marxian analysis of American capitalism. What are the facts regarding the concentration of production in large establishments, is there a shift taking place in occupations from industries producing necessities to industries producing luxuries, what is machinery doing to the worker, what is the trend in agriculture, is power being concentrated in the hands of finance capital, to what extent is the future of American capitalism tied up with the world market, is the present depression different from previous depressions? Such questions as these must be answered before we can map out an intelligent socialist program, and more especially before we can determine our tactics for carrying on the struggle against capitalism successfully. It is especially important to be following closely those factors and forces which determine the size, power and attitude of various social groups and classes. It is this kind of analysis which raises Socialism out of the mire of Utopianism which depended on attractive pictures of a future society rather than forces developing within the existing society to bring us to a new social order.

Thomas takes it for granted that by a campaign of education we can convert a majority of the voters in America to voting the Socialist ticket. At least he thinks there is a fair prospect of success. He also thinks that by parliamentary procedure the basic industries of the nation can be bought from their present owners and socialized. Thus by a gradual, democratic process we can grow into socialism. He contrasts this peaceful procedure with the violent methods of revolution advocated by the Communists, and chooses the peaceful, democratic method as the more civilized. Nowhere

do we get a real analysis of the question, however, as to whether such a choice is really open to us. In another field Thomas can see quite clearly that conditions sometimes prevent us from doing what we would like to do. Speaking of consumers' cooperative stores in America he says, "Now, alas, it is probably too late for us to build up a strong cooperative movement in this field. We have let chain stores get possession." May it not be that something similar has happened in the business of vote-getting? With the press, movies and radio in the hands of the enemy, perhaps we can convert a majority of voters to socialism, perhaps not. The question deserves attention. And even if we do get a parliamentary majority, what then? The activities of the German Social Democracy and the British Labor Party when in office do not inspire one with any too much confidence.

Any restatement of the Socialist case must evaluate the significance of the Russian Revolution. Thomas is open-minded on this subject but he draws a sharp line between socialism and communism. He constantly associates dictatorship and force with communism and peace and democracy with socialism. In practice there doesn't appear to be any basis for this distinction. Kerensky, the peaceful Socialist, tried to keep the Russians in the world war; the violent Communists got them out of it. The German Social Democracy backed the militarists to the limit; Liebknecht and Luxemburg went to jail for their opposition. The record of the British Labor Party in dealing with India gives little support to the assertion that Socialists in office are more peaceful or "democratic" than Communists.

Thomas greatly underestimates the significance of the work now being done in the Soviet Union toward the building of a socialist society. He likewise underestimates the role that the U. S. S. R. will play in destroying world capitalism. This is not a matter of minor importance in determining how we are going to get socialism. Unfortunately space will not permit a factual analysis of this phase of the question here.

Next let us consider Thomas's position on the question of how we can best mobilize labor's forces. The crucial question here, perhaps, is what role will be played by the labor unions, and what role will Socialists play in the unions. Thomas frankly analyzes the basic weaknesses of the American labor movement and doesn't hesitate to call a spade a spade—showing for example how John L. Lewis wrecked the United Mine Workers. His suggestions regarding the changes needed in the labor movement gen-

erally hit the mark. But he doesn't show how Socialists are to function effectively in the fight for this new, clean unionism. How much headway can be made against reactionaries, racketeers, Roman Catholic machines, and other capitalistic elements now dominating most of the unions if the Socialist Party adheres to a policy of "neutrality" within the unions? If socialist ideology and organization is to defeat capitalist ideology and organization in the American labor movement it must be prepared to fight all along the line.

A Socialist Party composed largely of middle class elements interested chiefly in social reform will never conduct such a fight. Therefore the question of the class composition of the Socialist Party is of prime importance. This is not discussed by Thomas at all.

The Socialist Party of America may become the party of liberal reform in this country or it may become a revolutionary working-class party. Today it is neither the one nor the other. Thomas's "America's Way Out" will help to swing the party toward liberalism.

JOHN C. KENNEDY

THE WORKERS' WORLD

Your Job and Your Pay: A Picture of the World in Which We Work, by Katherine H. Pollak and Tom Tippet. Vanguard Press, N. Y. \$2.00; \$1.00 in paper covers and special quantity rates when books are ordered direct from Brookwood Labor College, Katonah, N. Y.

IT is a pity that we do not have in the United States today a militant enough labor movement in general and a vigorous enough workers' education movement in particular to utilize to the full such an excellent contribution to working class literature as this work by Katherine H. Pollak and Tom Tippet. So far as a book can, this one helps to correct the defects in the American labor situation from which it suffers. First, it supplies organizers, propagandists, active rank and filers and labor sympathizers with data, analyses and arguments to aid them in their efforts to build a labor movement in this country. Secondly, it gives to wage earners who feel the need of educating themselves for activity on behalf of the working class a text book for use in local workers' classes or study groups and for home study where no classes exist.

"Your Job and Your Pay" is intended for workers. Others are invited to share in what the authors are saying. The book is written by two instructors at Brookwood Labor College who have been in charge of correspondence and extension

courses which this resident school established a few years ago to fill an urgent need. The writers are both now active in assisting the West Virginia miners in their organization campaign. An earlier edition of the book was tried out in mimeograph form in correspondence courses and in classes at Brookwood, at the Bryn Mawr, Barnard and Southern Summer Schools for Women in Industry, at the Columbia Conserve Company (where the workers share in the ownership of the enterprise) and at various industrial departments of the Young Women's Christian Association. On the basis of all this experience the manuscript was revised as it appears in the published volume. The text would not have run the gauntlet of intelligent workers so successfully had it not been well written in addition to being chock full of the kind of information these workers desire most.

The book is divided into four parts: Part I is entitled *How Industry Treats Its Workers*; Part II, *How We Got That Way*; Part III, *What Can Be Done?* and Part IV, *Changes Needed in the Way Industry Is Run*. The authors lay their cards on the table. They are frankly interested in promoting that kind of a labor movement which on the economic field is based on strenuous opposition to the employers and on the political to independent political action with a socialist goal. At the same time they keep out of current squabbles. Their chief aim is to create a loyalty to the labor movement as a whole, leaving it to the informed worker to decide for himself what part or parts of the movement he will support. In this purpose Pollak and Tippet succeed. They present fundamental arguments and basic facts and arrange them in convenient form for ready reference. The book should prove useful to those who want to examine the underlying premises of the labor movement. They will be thoroughly convinced of the essential soundness of the wage earners' cause by a realistic analysis of the world in which the worker must work and live.

LOUIS STANLEY.

OUR BOSSES

The Nemesis of American Business, by Stuart Chase. 191 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

NO one could fail to put a finger on at least one cause leading to the present depression, whereas Stuart Chase has left practically none untouched. Traveling from a self-sustaining, pre-machine Aztec village where unemployment is unknown to the eighth level beneath New York City's streets, he has described vividly the many tragic flaws in our economic

system leading to wholesale unemployment with periodic regularity.

The unlimited plant capacity making for drastic over-production in the automotive industry, augmented by the hand-to-mouth buying policy inaugurated by manufacturers and merchants small and large in all fields during the last few years showed up not only the automotive industry's weakness, but the weakness of the entire American credit system and economic structure. Doubtless the automotive industry with its many attendant accessory industries was the backbone of the late lamented prosperity era. This the author proves statistically beyond dispute.

According to Stuart Chase the engineers are humanity's only salvation. Inasmuch as they precipitated us into this mess with their mechanized robots, etc., their systematic planning along humane lines should bring us out, and into that beautiful Private Utopia that is pictured in the closing chapter; or "It may be that we are faced in the West with years of strikes, riots, insurrections, dictatorships, and a wholesale retreat from specialization to local self-sufficiency. Such a situation would constitute complete admission that we have been routed by the Machine Age." At this time, however, there is little indication that the engineers are working toward the salvation of mankind. But they have freed us from the machines as well as our jobs at one and the same time.

This book is composed of ten of the author's articles previously published in various periodicals, but here embodied in one work. Each article in itself is stimulating to say the least. Unlike most writers on the present depression, Stuart Chase has propounded his own solutions to the many problems facing the American-out-of-work-man today. He points out that "America is the only country in which age limits have been set up in wholesale lots" barring men and women 35 or 40 and over from many industries. The greatest single cause is the group insurance plan subscribed to by practically all American industries; the higher the average age of the workers covered, the higher the insurance premium. Mr. Chase's cure for this is old age pensions financed by the government, as in European countries. "With the State bearing the cost, the employer has no incentive to discriminate on the score of age alone, apart from skill or physical strength. Other nations know little, if anything, of group insurance."

Chief among the proposals to alleviate unemployment are the shorter work week, and the shorter work day for "if the machine doesn't get you the stop watch will." Although the old age pen-

sion plan is played up prominently, no mention is made of the ever-growing popular demand at this time for unemployment insurance as a relief. Old age pensions will not be used to help young able workers who are the innocent victims of cyclical, devastating depressions.

If there is any one writer who presents statistics in an interesting manner, Stuart Chase is that person. Without them his articles would be commonplace

STANLEY FRANCIS GUEST.

THE INDIANS' "FRIEND"

Massacre, by Robert Gessner. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, New York, 1931.

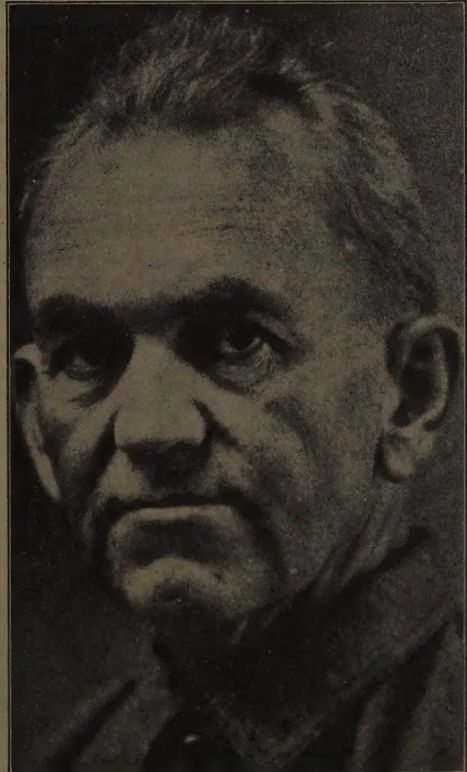
THIS is a good account of a thoroughly bad situation—that of the American Indian in the hands of a negligent and indifferent bureau of the Department of Interior. Significantly, the author hopefully dedicates the book to the first congress that will eradicate what Lincoln seventy years ago called an accursed

system. The author, an instructor in the English Department of New York University, set out to discover and appraise Indian folksongs. Instead, he has written, in 400 pages, an indictment of an attitude and a method which do not seem to improve and clearly show that in this year 1931 Lincoln's appraisal still holds. Fact is piled upon fact to show the misstatements of the Indian Bureau. The flogging of Indian children in the Reservation schools, the use of Indian child labor in the beet fields, the rottenness of the medical service, the tearing up of treaties with the Indian tribes, the exploitation of Indian labor, and the misuse of Indian moneys are all cases in point of the unholy mess that has been made of an unfilled national obligation. Throughout the telling the trails of public utility magnates, railroad officials, Baptist and other soul-saving cults, greedy local nitwits and governmental incompetents cross and crisscross in a scramble to cheat the Indian.

WILLIAM L. NUNN.

Mooney Must Be Freed!

We shall continue
to run
Tom Mooney's
Picture in
LABOR AGE,
until he steps out of
San Quentin Prison,
a free man.
You have a duty in
this fight.
Write Governor
Rolph of California
and arrange local
demonstrations!



WHAT OUR READERS THINK

BROOKWOOD FOR THE SUMMER

Dear Editor:-

This is to announce the opening of Brookwood's summer season for 1931, and to remind you that there are accommodations available—in cottages, apartments and single rooms—up in the Labor College in the Westchester hills.

Katonah is 40 miles from New York City, an hour and a half on the trains, which run frequently. With an extensive labor library, a tennis court which is being put in good condition, and a swimming pool on the grounds, Brookwood offers an attractive, friendly, yet quiet environment for guests who wish to stay the entire summer, to come out for weekends or week days, and for those who continue to work in the City during the summer.

This year we are engaging a competent Dietician-Housekeeper to supervise the commissary department, and take general responsibility for the comfort of guests.

The season runs from June 15 to September 15. The rates are reasonable, and guests may make individual arrangements about taking meals in the Brookwood dining room to suit their convenience.

We should be glad to hear from you further if you are interested. We should also appreciate your telling your friends about us.

Sincerely yours,

CARA COOK, Secretary, Brookwood

CALIFORNIA WORKERS

Dear Editor:

I had never heard of the C. P. L. A. until I heard Muste speak out here, although I have been a member of organized labor since I came here 8 years ago. However, I have subscribed to *LABOR AGE* and *Labor's News* and hope to become a member of the CPLA before long. I also read your article in the March issue with great interest and also "Why don't you organize?" by J. P. Burke.

How we are going to change the mentality of the average American born wage slave is something I cannot comprehend as I have watched the local building trades crowd for 7 years and am at a loss what kind of ideals these people really have. I am a member of the bricklayers union but do you think that the local wants to affiliate with the

building trades council? No, they don't, because they say that by doing so the rest of the building trades will down the bricklayers in every conflict possible.

Just now a part of the members want to cut the wages themselves to \$8 a day in order to get the few jobs that are going to be here this summer. They will do that because they say the Los Angeles scabs will do it otherwise for \$4 or \$5 a day. However, the majority are still in favor of keeping up the scale but I cannot say there is a fighting spirit.

However, now is the time to give them all the literature that makes them think if not act and that is another difficulty. Is there any way to get some C.P.L.A. literature to distribute among the workers? I am making \$22 a week and cannot spare much for propaganda with a family of five persons. However, I do the best I can. JOHN SCHMIDT.

From a California city.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Dear Editor:

If an individual sovereign could be held responsible for the present, worldwide unemployment condition, beyond a doubt the millions unemployed would punish that individual. Modern politics and economics teaches that the sovereign will of the people, that is the united will of many, represented by the State, permits, tolerates, and fosters unemployment, viewing it as a necessary factor of successful industrialism. The sovereign will of the many, the State, escapes the punishment that the individual would receive.

In the evolution of economic society the time has arrived to regard unemployment as a retarding factor in the general growth and expansion of civilization. Unemployment is the curse of modern civilization. It is a cancer in the side of the body social.

Those representatives of the people, whether leaders in government, finance or industry, who refuse to consider changes in the economic structure to form it in accordance with the complexities of modern conditions, are in reality, attempting to serve their selfish interests instead of the welfare of the government and the people as a whole. They should be treated as enemies of the present

government. A nation, ruled in its various activities, by men of this type, can not last under the challenge of those who claim the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as being inherent and inalienable.

LEE R. UHLER.
Baltimore, Md.

WHEN COMMUNISTS ARE IN THE MAJORITY

Dear Editor:

Have you ever seen the communists in action, particularly when they outnumber their opponents and how they handle them? I have had the pleasure or rather the opposite—on two different occasions, and, although I am not their opponent in the strict sense of the term, I must confess that their action at certain times, especially when they are in the majority, arouses me against them and drives me almost to take sides with their opponents who are not necessarily my friends.

The recent Foster—Muste debate and a similar debate that I attended in Chicago several years ago has filled me almost with disgust and bitterness against them at seeing their entire disregard for the rights of their opponents because the latter happened to be in the minority and the former in the majority. As soon as this happens they ride all over their opponents in total disregard of their own teachings and the ethics and morals which while subject to interpretation nevertheless is conceded even by them that the observation of such moral codes are essential to differentiate us from jungle life if we are to be different and the communist no doubt will admit that we are different. Furthermore, they are the ones who aim at the highest kind of life, claiming that the present kind is not advanced enough for them and our civilization. But too often they fail to exemplify this in action to make us follow them and instead, except in an economic crisis where people's thoughts, actions and behavior are molded from the stomach rather than the head, make us avoid them. The person who has a fair regard for tolerance and fair play must feel antagonistic to them at seeing them as I saw them be unfair to their opponents when these engage in debates with them.

L. KIRSHBAUM.

Open Letter to Matthew Woll

(Continued from page 11)

The employers and their lackeys, the courts, have the proper contempt for the officialdom of American organized labor, a moral and intellectual bankrupt.

No doubt, whatever labor idealism you possessed at the outset of your career has been stifled in the plutocratic atmosphere of the N. C. F., which includes in its membership some of the most malignant and resourceful enemies of unionism of any kind, with the exception of company unionism.

No doubt you find it more congenial to associate yourself with these individuals and advocate their economic and social philosophy which will keep labor in perpetual subjection to capitalism, than you would in undertaking the disagreeable and often dangerous task of organizing the great army of unorganized.

Yours truly,
UNEMPLOYED CHAPEL,
N. Y. Photo-engravers' Union No. 1.

Militant Radicals

(Continued from Page 13)

et al., does materialize, one of these days we may wake up to find a strong militant group arising ready to go with Muste and further. And they may not be willing to wait for the slow methods imposed by political action.

If one recoils before Muste's program than the logic is clear enough. Let some party arise which is capable of securing social justice in the country by less drastic methods. If such a party as that outlined by Muste ever makes real headway the responsibility will be rather that of the present Republican and Democratic parties than that of the handful of militant radicals who espouse the Muste cause. The Bourbons, rather than Rouseau and Babeuf, brought on the French Revolution.

The Depression Hits the Southwest

(Continued from page 23)

the social attitude? Is there a social attitude? If there is it is too weak, puny and inarticulate to matter. There is discontent and unrest. Thousands of workers are foot-loose and roving. Freight trains are once more filled with Knights of the Road following the trail of Lady Luck across the continent and back. Respectable workers are taking to transcontinental meanderings, either in flivvers of their own possession, hitch hiking or riding de luxe on bus cushions. Another factor has entered civilization to complicate an already insoluble problem. By its cheap rates the bus is adding to the fluidity of labor. It is making it easy for workers to cut loose from old surroundings and look upon a trek of a thousand miles with no greater trepidation than they formerly looked upon ten miles.

"And where are you going, Buddy?" I asked of my temporary travelling companion, as we were raising the dust on Oklahoma's unsurfaced roads.

"Oh, me, I'm headed for Detroit," was his enthusiastic answer. I almost gasped with astonishment. Of course,

it wasn't the distance that floored me but the physical proof that anyone would want to leave any place for the ugliest depression center in the whole country.

"Well," I continued, my curiosity forcing my persistency, "do you know what you will find in Detroit when you get there?"

"Oh, yes, I know there are plenty of unemployed. But I have special skill," was his assured answer.

And so they travel. Workers are still seeking their salvation individually and look for the pot of gold at the other end of the rainbow. That they'll find a garbage can there—they know not yet, not having seen Jerger's cartoon in the April LABOR AGE.

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